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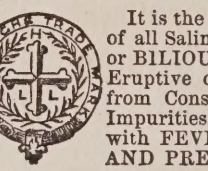

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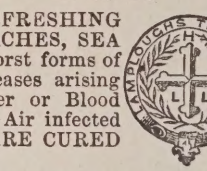

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The Romance of Common Life.

No. 1.—RETRIBUTION.

One afternoon towards the close of the month *Brumaire*, year 2, of the French Republic—November 1793 by Christian reckoning—Mrs. Arlington, a recently-widowed English lady, was engaged with her only remaining attendant, Annette Vaudry, an honest Bordelaise, in making preparations to quit Paris for the south-west of France, where she hoped to find means of embarking for England. Her husband, whose long and painful illness, rendering his removal impossible, had detained them so many months in the distracted city, expired a few days before, and had been privately and hurriedly buried at Père la Chaise. He left his wife and child not only friendless in a land of strangers, but surrounded and in danger of being engulfed by the eddies of a sanguinary revolution. Full

of terror as of grief had been the days and nights passed by Mrs. Arlington at the bedside of her suffering husband—strange and appalling the *spectra* which had flitted past the sick man's windows. Early in the year the death-tumbrils conveying a king to execution had swept by; and but lately, the queen and Madame Roland, D'Orleans and the Girondists, with a host of minor victims, had followed to the same doom. Terror, all-potent anarch of the time, was solemnly enthroned, and the very air pulsated with fear. The British Government had replied to the announcement of the death of the king by a declaration of war; and, if betrayed to the authorities as a long traitorously concealed countrywoman of "Pitt"—the *bête noire* of Paris clubbists—as the widow of a gentleman known to have been on terms of intimacy with many of the fallen aristocrats, the fate of Mrs. Arlington might, without the gift of prophecy, have been easily foretold. Fortunately, the persons with whom for the last ten months she had been domiciled—ardent republicans as they might be—were trustworthy and kind-hearted; and Annette Vaudry—the English servants had been sent off at the first intimation of danger—proved equally faithful and discreet. It was amid this terrible state of affairs that Mrs. Arlington, having, to her joyful surprise, not only obtained in her assumed name of Le Bon a passport, but a certificate of civism, without which no one could pass the barriers, prepared for her dangerous journey to Bordeaux, the native city of

Annette, where it was thought means of leaving France might be with less risk sought for and obtained than at nearer but more jealously watched ports.

Another and all-sufficing reason with Mrs. Arlington for undertaking this long journey to the south, instead of attempting to escape by way of Havre or Calais, was her determination not to separate from her daughter, a child of scarcely three years of age, except in the last extremity. Annette Vaudry, as a native of Bordeaux, had not the slightest difficulty, on exhibiting her passport at the Hôtel de Ville, to get it *visé*, or indorsed, in order to be enabled to return to the place of her birth. There was no danger that she would excite the slightest suspicion; and Mrs. Arlington resolved, with the view of insuring, in all eventualities, the safety of her child, that it should pass during the journey as Annette's. It had also been determined, in the event of Mrs. Arlington being detained, or of any other misfortune befalling her, that Annette should as speedily as possible pass over to England with her precious charge. The mistress and servant were to travel in the same diligence, but there was to be no apparent acquaintance between them. Their places had been secured by different messengers, and they were to arrive separately at the office from whence the vehicle took its final departure from Paris. Annette Vaudry was also necessarily intrusted with a large sum of money in gold and jewels.

Mrs. Arlington's preparations were at length com-

plete; Annette and the little Julie were already gone; and, bidding her kind hosts an affectionate farewell, she left her place of refuge, disguised as a French countrywoman of the humbler classes, and escorted by a porter, who had undertaken to carry her purposely scanty luggage. Evening had set in, and a cold, drizzling rain was falling, but the ill-lighted, dirty streets were nevertheless alive with groups of men and women eagerly engaged in discussing the politics and most stirring incidents of the day; and occasionally, on passing a café or wine-shop, the door would be suddenly flung open, and gangs of noisy revellers—their sinister features briefly but strongly marked in the streaming light—bursting forth, helped to swell the wild yells and *Ça ira* exultations which filled the air. Not the humblest fiacre could proceed any considerable distance without the inmates, if any, undergoing the rude scrutiny of suspicious patriotism; and Mrs. Arlington tremblingly congratulated herself on having followed Monsieur Henri's earnest advice, to walk rather than ride to the barrier. Happily, too, the man who carried her luggage was well known to many of the excited republicans as a *bon camarade;* and his off-hand replies to the queries apparently suggested by the patrician features and graceful carriage of the supposed countrywoman, amply justified the said Henri's recommendation of him, and enabled her to escape the peril of being detained or questioned by those eager caterers for the guillotine. With trembling limbs and

beating heart she passed along, and at length reached the bureau of the diligence, close to the Barrière du Maine. Arrived there, a still more perilous scrutiny awaited her from the agents of the commune, in attendance to deprive suspected persons of all chance of escape. Deadly pale, and wholly unable to master the betraying emotions which agitated her frame, Mrs. Arlington tendered her papers for the principal official's inspection.

"Approche, donc, citoyenne," said the man somewhat coarsely; let us see if the writer of these papers is a good hand at a likeness. Humph! 'Twenty-three years of age, light-brown hair, hazel eyes, fair complexion'—not absolutely incorrect, certainly, but still conveying a very poor impression of the charming original, who is, I must say, the most splendid specimen of a *bonne bourgeoise* travelling to the Gironde on family affairs I ever had the honour of meeting. Entrez, citoyenne," continued the official, with a malicious grin, "we must have some further conversation together. You, conducteur, may proceed; this good Madame Le Bon will scarcely pass the barrier tonight."

A cry of despair, impossible to repress, broke from the terrified lady, and she turned instinctively towards the diligence, as if to snatch one last embrace of her child.

"This way, citoyenne," cried the officer, rudely seizing her by the arm.

"How now, Rigaud," suddenly broke in a fierce, authoritative voice; "what do you mean by arresting my *compagne de voyage?* Are you mad?"

The speaker was a handsome young man in the uniform of a dragoon officer, who, unperceived by Mrs. Arlington, had followed her from her lodgings, and without whose aid, in reassuring and suspicious *bonnets rouges* and *tappe-durs*, but half satisfied by the explanations of the porter, she would scarcely have reached so far.

"*Your* travelling companion, Captain Duplessis?"

"Certainly! Madame," continued the stranger, respectfully addressing Mrs. Arlington, "allow me to apologise for this man's rudeness, and at the same time to hand you to your seat."

"Monsieur Henri!" ejaculated the bewildered lady.

"Not a word, madame," he hurriedly whispered as he closed the door, "as you value your own and your child's safety."

"Well, but, capitaine!" persisted the somewhat mystified official.

"*Ah ca*, no impertinence, Rigaud: here are my papers; they are *en régle*, I believe. Or is it, perchance," added the officer with simulated vehemence, perceiving that Rigaud still hesitated, "that you, notoriously one of the Danton faction, affect doubts you do not really feel, in order to annoy or delay the friend and messenger of Saint Just?"

"Not at all, not at all," hurriedly replied the official,

in his turn a little alarmed, for in those days no man's head felt quite firmly on his shoulders; "but this person is evidently no Bordeaux bourgeoise, as she is designated in these papers; and, with all proper deference to you, she must remain here till further inquiry be made. Saint Just is not a man to screen plotters or aristocrats. Please to descend, madame," he continued, at the same time reopening the door of the diligence, and seizing Mrs. Arlington by the arm. "Descend, if you please, and at once!"

"*Scélérat!*" shouted Duplessis, unable to restrain himself, and hurling Rigaud with stunning violence against the door of the bureau. Half-a-dozen fellows sprang forward to the assistance of their chief, and the affair would no doubt have terminated fatally, not only for the lady, but possibly at least for her chivalrous protector, had it not been for the opportune arrival of a youngish man, who, wrapt comfortably in a stout cloak, was stepping briskly along, and humming, as he went, a light joyous air, as if in defiance both of the times and the weather.

"Camille," exclaimed Duplessis, struggling fiercely in the grasp of the guardians of the barrier, "is that you?"

"Assuredly! And you? What, Cousin Henri! What is the meaning of this? Why, Rigaud, you must be crazed!"

"I think not, Citoyen Desmoulins," replied that officer, addressing Danton's friend and intimate with

great respect, and at the same time, by a sign, releasing Duplessis; "but this gentleman persists in passing an *élégante* through the barrier in the disguise of a *paysanne*."

"How is this, Henri?"

"A word in your ear, Camille," said Duplessis, drawing his friend and relative out of the hearing of Mrs. Arlington. "This lady, Camille, is"—— The rest of the sentence was whispered in his cousin's ear.

"What, *la belle Marguérite?* And a runaway match too! Why, I understood she was as cold as snow. Oh you sly fox!" and the gay-spirited editor of the "Vieux Cordelier" laughed prodigiously. "Rigaud, you must permit the lady to pass. It is an affair of the heart—you understand? At all events I will be answerable for the consequences, and that, I suppose, will suffice."

"As you please, citoyen," muttered Rigaud. "But"——

"Enough, enough. Let there be no further delay, for this weather is frightful. Adieu, Henri. My compliments to the lady. Call on us directly you return; Lucile will be delighted to see you both: I shall remember you to her. *Au revoir!*" The diligence rumbled through the barrier, and Camille Desmoulins, glad to have extricated his cousin from an unpleasant situation, passed gaily on, humming

"Où peut-on être mieux
Qu'au sein de sa famille?"

"Excellent!" murmured the dissatisfied official, as the coach pursued its way. "A wedding trip, no doubt; and the bridegroom, I see, prefers riding outside in this bitter weather to being seated within beside the bride! One would not lightly offend Camille; still, this affair must be sifted. Where is the man who brought the lady's luggage? Oh, there you are. Step this way, friend, if you please; I must have a word or two with you." The porter obeyed, and they passed together into the bureau de police.

The officer whose energetic interference thus saved Mrs. Arlington from arrest and its too-surely fatal consequences was Henri Duplessis, captain in a dragoon regiment attached to the Army of the North. Saint Just, in his frequent hurried visits to that army, for the purpose of insuring the faithful and energetic execution of his own and Carnot's instructions, had more than once witnessed with admiration the young officer's conduct under fire; and a close friendship, quite irrespective of politics, had, in consequence, sprung up between them. Duplessis had been lately summoned to the capital to give evidence before the Committee of Public Safety on various military details, and whilst there had happened to call upon his maternal uncle, M. de Liancourt, just as this eminent physician received a note from Madame Le Bon—Mrs. Arlington—requesting his immediate attendance on her husband, with whom life seemed rapidly closing, in consequence of a renewed effusion of blood.

M. de Liancourt, or rather Citoyen Liancourt, was a physician in high practice; affecting ardent republicanism before the world, but to his intimates holding very different language.

"Henri," said he, rising as soon as he had finished the perusal of Mrs. Arlington's note, and seizing his hat and gloves, "if you have a fancy to look upon a beautiful *aristocrate*—a rare sight now in France, thanks to the sharp practice of your friends—come with me. You are not in uniform, and I will introduce you as an assistant. *Allons!*"

"Le Bon is a very aristocratic name truly," said Duplessis, as they emerged into the street.

"Merely a disguise: her name is Arlington, and she is a native of 'perfide Albion.'"

"An Englishwoman! What misfortune can have detained her here?"

"The sudden illness of her husband, who imprudently delayed his departure in order to effect the arrangement of a heavy pecuniary claim he had against D'Orleans, contracted, I believe, when that very estimable personage was in England."

"Was he at all involved in Egalité's intrigues?"

"Nonsense! But what, in this second year of Fraternity and Liberty would, as interpreted by the excellent Tinville—a remarkable artist that, in his own very original line—prove quite as conclusive for all necessary purposes, Mr. Arlington used sometimes to idle away an hour or two at Sainte Amaranthe's with Vergniaud, Buzot, and others of that set."

"In that case he does well to conceal himself."

"Yes; your guillotine is a sharp reasoner in such cases—brief and thoroughly conclusive in all matters of doubt and difficulty. By the way, Henri, your fiery enthusiasm for the Republic, one and indivisible, seems to have strangely cooled of late. The fall, a few days since, of the beautiful head of Madame Roland appears to have suggested doubts to a great number of the enthusiastic youths of this delightful city."

"Not doubts, Monsieur de Liancourt, of the glory and excellence of freedom: say rather that it engendered abhorrence of the men who by such acts stain and dim its lustre. But let us talk of other things. This Englishwoman, is she so very beautiful?"

"Singularly so; even for that land of female loveliness. You know I resided there several years."

"And an *aristocrate?*"

"By birth, feeling, education, manners—*yes;* though in a sense quite opposed to our use of the term. In active, political creed, these fair islanders are far behind our *dames de la Halle.* And in truth, Henri, if the divinities of social life *will* soil their white wings in the accursed caldron of politics, they cannot be surprised if—— But here we are."

The apartment into which the physician and his nephew were stealthily ushered was a large, and apparently handsomely-furnished one, as far as could be discerned by the dull light of a cloudy November day,

struggling through the heavy and partially-closed window-curtains. The glance of Duplessis became rivetted the instant he entered, upon the pale, patrician features of a gentleman but little more than his own age, who was reclining upon a sofa, with his head supported by pillows. Death, he saw at once, had set his fatal signet there; and soldier as he was, and custom-hardened to such sights, an emotion of profound pity swept across his mind at the contemplation of the premature end of one so young, so eager for life, as a man loved by the beautiful bending over him in tearful grief must necessarily be. Mrs. Arlington, who had been reading to the patient, rose as De Liancourt softly advanced, and questioned with the mute eloquence of her radiant eyes—which sorrow seemed but to gem with a diviner lustre—the oracle from whose lips the words of fate were about to fall. Not so her husband. The agitation of a feverish hope no longer fluttered the spirit of the dying man. His glance continued fixed upon the countenance of his wife with an expression of anxious tenderness, as if the stroke which he felt could not be long averted must needs fall on her with greatest force; and that look deepened in its unselfish love when De Liancourt, in the low, calm accents of professional decision, said, "My fears, often expressed, are verified. Life with you, my dear sir, is near, very near its close."

A cry of uncontrollable grief burst from the young wife at this confirmation of her worst fears. She threw

herself on her knees beside the couch of her dying husband, and kissed his pale thin hands with vehement emotion.

"Julia, beloved friend—companion—wife," murmured Mr. Arlington, "you promised to bear this visitation with a Christian's patience, with the devotedness and hope of a mother whose child is still spared to her?" He was answered only by convulsive sobs, and presently continued—"Now that our excellent De Liancourt is with us, let us not, dearest, waste the brief moments remaining to me in unavailing lamentations. *I* shall soon be beyond the reach of man's violence and enmity, but you—our child"——

He paused, and his anxious look was turned towards the physician. De Liancourt's countenance fell.

"Have you made the inquiries we spoke of?" said Mr. Arlington, with an expression of dismay which the announcement of inevitable and almost immediate death had not been able to produce.

"I have, and fear that some delay must still be endured. The scrutiny to which all persons who attempt to pass the barriers are subjected becomes daily more stringent, so that"——

"God of heaven!" interrupted the dying man, "this is indeed to taste of the full bitterness of death!"

Mrs. Arlington, panic-stricken by a new terror, started wildly on her feet, snatched a beautiful child, sleeping on an ottoman beside her, with passionate eagerness to her arms, and for the first time

afforded Duplessis a full view of her person and countenance.

He felt his heart beat tumultuously, and his eyes fill with irrepressible emotion as he gazed upon that pale, yet queenly and brilliant vision, with its Madona attitude and grace, and subduing tenderness of sorrowful expression. To what painter, to what poet, had lettings down of Heaven revealed angelic beauty like to that? He essayed to speak, but the words died on his tongue.

"We must still trust," continued De Liancourt soothingly, "in the merciful Providence which has so long shielded"——

"I have influence, madame — sir," broke in Duplessis, recovering his voice, and speaking with a confused and hurried earnestness; "influence with my friends Saint Just, Carnot. I will insure the safety of the lady, of the child, at the hazard of my life—my life!" He paused in extreme disorder. A thousand lights seemed to dance before his eyes, and a multitude of sounds were ringing in his ears.

"Who is this gentleman, De Liancourt?" demanded Mr. Arlington with something of the haughtiness of manner which distinguished him when the pulse of life beat high and full. Mrs. Arlington, who had not before observed Duplessis, coloured with surprise as the agitated tones of the young man caught her ear.

"My nephew, Henri," replied the physician. "He has, as he says, some influence at head-quarters, and will, I doubt not, willingly exert it."

"His *friends* Saint Just and Carnot of the 'Salut Public!' But that you, De Liancourt, vouch for him"——

The countenance of Duplessis flamed at the implied suspicion of his honour, and his uncle hastily interrupted the speaker.

"My nephew is not the friend, my dear sir, of those persons in the sense you apprehend; and I would pledge my life upon his faith."

"Enough, De Liancourt—your word suffices; and you, sir, will, I trust, excuse the momentary doubt of a person anxious for the safety of a wife and child. If you *can* aid them to escape from this place of violence and crime, the prayers and blessings of a dying man will be yours."

Duplessis reiterated his offers of service in a calmer and more coherent manner than before; and then, at the suggestion of De Liancourt, who feared that the excitement of such a conversation might hasten the fatal crisis, which, however, could not be long delayed, the conference terminated—the physician promising, as he left the apartment, to look in again early on the morrow.

"Henri," said De Liancourt gravely, as he shook hands with Duplessis at his own door, after a silent walk from Mr. Arlington's, "the task you appear so anxious to undertake is full of peril, and, moreover, one that must not be entered upon from any motive unworthy of the son of my sainted sister. Forgive

me, Henri," he added, in a mild, deprecatory tone, in reply to his nephew's glance of fire, "it is for you that I chiefly fear."

Mr. Arlington died the day after this visit. The beauty, the multiplied perils which environed the bereaved young wife, excited, as we have seen, a tumult of emotions in the chivalrous breast of Duplessis—soon to be resolved into a fervent, devoted, but, as he instinctively felt, hopeless passion. He at once determined to save her, or to share her fate if unsuccessful. It was he who procured her passport and certificate of civism, and by his influence with Saint Just, he obtained for himself leave of absence from Carnot to proceed to the Gironde on affairs, as he stated, of family importance.

As intimated by the official guardian of the barrier, Duplessis rode on the outside of the diligence, protecting himself as he best might with his cloak from the inclemency of the weather. Throughout the entire journey he scrupulously abstained from intruding upon Mrs. Arlington's presence, save when her safety required that he should do so. That lady no doubt divined the nature of the emotions which influenced the conduct of the young officer—for quickly comes such knowledge—but however impossible she might feel it to reciprocate his sentiments, she could not feel the less grateful for services so hazardous and so unselfish. The heroic feeling which prompted a lover to

risk his life to facilitate the departure of the adored object from the country with which his own destinies were indissolubly bound up, could not but be gratefully appreciated by a generous, high-minded woman such as Mrs. Arlington. More than that was not in her power.

II.

The journey was a long and anxious one. The shadow of the terrible régime enthroned in Paris enveloped the entire land of France. Suspicion, unquiet, terror, pervaded every town and village through which they passed. At Chateauroux, where the passengers were rudely questioned by a busy official, Mrs. Arlington's defective accent and irrepressible air of hauteur would unquestionably have caused her arrest, but for the bold bearing and ready assurance of the dragoon officer. At Limoges a similar peril was encountered, and with still greater difficulty evaded. Indeed, the nearer they approached the cities of the south, the thicker seemed to grow the air with exhalations of suspicion, hate, and fear. The names of Tallien, Isabeau, Madame de Fontenay, flew from mouth to mouth in every variety of emphasis and cadence. The guillotine, everybody agreed, was in full activity in Bordeaux, the cradle of the fated Girondists.

When the lumbering vehicle drew near that city, there were no other passengers inside than Mrs. Arlington and her servant and child. "Annette," said

she, after covering the lips, the forehead, the cheeks of her daughter with passionate kisses, "remember not to lose a moment should any misfortune befal me in obtaining a passage to England." The dreaded barrier was reached at last, and, at the invitation of the officer in command, Mrs. Arlington descended from the diligence; Duplessis' ready arm was instantly proffered; "Courage, madame," he whispered, as he led her gently, and with assumed confidence, towards the guard-room; "this danger passed, you have nothing more to fear."

Annette's papers were the first examined. There was no difficulty with her: she was personally known to several of the municipal soldiers, and, after replying to one or two unimportant questions, she passed forth.

"Marie Le Bon," said the officer, turning abruptly towards Mrs. Arlington, "your journey ends at Bordeaux. To-morrow, probably, you will appear before the representatives of the sovereign people. This night you pass in prison."

"What outrage is this?" exclaimed Duplessis, overwhelmed with consternation.

"Outrage, *mon capitaine!*" coolly replied the officer. "Nothing of the kind. Rigaud was not quite so credulous as you would have wished. Thanks to his researches, and the speed with which the agents of the Republic travel, I have now the honour of arresting Madame Arlington, foreign *intrigante*, and spy in the service of the detestable Pitt."

Expostulations, denials, intreaties, were alike useless, and the unfortunate lady, almost unconscious from excess of terror, was hurried off to prison. Duplessis accompanied her to the gate, and would have entered with her, but was thrust back by the guard. The officer who effected the arrest at the barrier, for all reply to his frenzied supplications, sourly intimated that, but for former services rendered to the Republic, and the friendship of St. Just and others, he would no doubt have been permitted the felicity not only of occupying the same prison, but of ascending the same scaffold, with the woman he had traitorously aided to escape.

On the fourth day from her arrest, Mrs. Arlington was placed for judgment before Isabeau and other satellites of the victorious Montagne. Duplessis was by her side, and, reckless of his own safety, inveighed with passionate vehemence against the injustice and cruelty that would sacrifice an innocent and helpless stranger to the groundless suspicions of a vindictive faction. Loud and ominous murmurs from the crowd which composed the audience frequently interrupted his audacious denunciations. Silence having at length been enforced, the helpless lady was, with brief form, doomed to the scaffold. She was then reconveyed to prison, to await the next day's *fournée*, or batch of victims; and Duplessis rushed from the hall of death in wild distraction. There was but one resource left, and that he must without delay invoke.

At this period a young Spanish lady, Dona Theresa Cabarus, otherwise Madame de Fontenay, reigned, by the influence of her dazzling beauty, supreme over the heart of Tallien, the dictator governing Bordeaux in the name of the Republic. All testimonies agree that this remarkable woman chiefly used her power to mitigate the ferocity of the decrees which would otherwise have decimated the devoted city. She was an angel of mercy to the unfortunate citizens of Bordeaux. According to the historian of the Girondists, "Tallien no longer desired power but that she might partake of it, grandeur but to raise her to it, glory but to cover her with it." This was the lady—"beautiful, brown woman," Carlyle calls her—whose letter, some months later, addressed to Tallien from the Paris dungeons, where she lay in hourly expectation of death, precipitated the fall of Robespierre, by determining Tallien to attack him in the Convention without delay.

With headlong haste Duplessis sought her residence. She was fortunately at home, having just returned from a drive; and, with the help of a considerable bribe to the domestic in waiting, he obtained immediate access to her presence. She was seated on a sofa, attired fantastically, but not unbecomingly for her style of face and figure, in a light, classical Grecian costume. Duplessis threw himself at the feet of the all-powerful beauty, and with earnest eloquence besought her aid.

Dona Theresa seemed affected by his passionate

appeal. She gently raised him, and motioned to a seat a few paces from her.

"This lady is very beautiful, I hear?"

"As the stars of heaven! As your own beauteous self!" added Duplessis with better tact, after a moment's pause, "though of a different type of loveliness."

"And you, captain, are a favoured wooer?"

Duplessis' cheek flamed involuntarily to hear the lady, whose image was crowned in his imagination with a halo of purity and grace, so glibly alluded to by La Cabarus; and he coldly replied, "A stranger, madame, and a widow but of yesterday, could be to me, or to any other honourable man, but as a sister."

Madame de Fontenay coloured, and a slight frown contracted her lustrous forehead.

"After all, Captain Duplessis, if the lady be, as the tribunal has decided, an *intrigante*, an emissary of Pitt, it would ill become either of us, as sincere friends of our glorious Republic, to aid her escape from the doom she has so recklessly incurred."

"Believe it not, madame," exclaimed Duplessis, with wrathful energy. "She is as innocent as yourself of plotting against the Republic. She remained in Paris to smoothe the pillow of her dying husband; and who will not admit that that is woman's highest, holiest duty?"

Awkward Duplessis! The ominous frown deepened, and a bright flush, certainly not arising from any plea-

surable feeling, tinted the clear olive of Dona Theresa's complexion.

"I am afraid, Captain Duplessis," said she, rising, as if to terminate the interview, "that I cannot successfully interpose in favour of this person."

"Not successfully interpose, madame!" cried the captain, painfully aware that he had committed some blunder, but, from his ignorance of the lady's history, not certain of what kind. "Have I not heard that you are omnipotent with him whose will is fate in this unhappy city? Can it be that such transcendent beauty could plead *in vain* to any being of earth's mould? Impossible! And will you, whom the inhabitants of Bordeaux, of all ranks, degrees, and opinions, pronounce with one voice to be as heroically tender in heart and disposition as you are radiantly beautiful in person, hesitate to exercise that all-subduing power in behalf of a helpless being of your own sex exposed to the cruelties of ruthless men?"

"Well, Citoyen Duplessis, replied Madame de Fontenay with a brilliant smile, "if you are not a successful lover, you, I am sure, deserve to be one. I will not disparage in your eyes the opinion the good people of Bordeaux have, you say, formed of me. The lady is safe, take my word for it, as if her foot already touched her native soil. Wait for me here. Representative Tallien resides but two doors off: I shall return in a few minutes."

Duplessis poured forth a torrent of incoherent thanks,

amidst which the senora gracefully sailed out of the apartment.

She was some time absent, and when she returned Duplessis, judging from the excited expression of her glowing countenance, feared that some difficulty had arisen which she had not been able to surmount.

"Alas, madame, all is, I fear, lost!"

"Reassure yourself, Monsieur Duplessis. There has been considerable difficulty, in consequence of the peremptory instructions from Paris regarding this lady; but I am not accustomed to sue in vain. Here is the order for Madame Arlington's liberation. It were well she departed at once. You do not accompany her?"

"No, generous lady, I remain to share the fortunes of the Republic. May He, madame, whom so many of us are too apt in these times to disregard, bless and reward you for this holy deed!"

A quarter of an hour afterwards, Mrs. Arlington was at liberty. As Duplessis, after leaving Madame de Fontenay's house, was hastening towards the prison, he was accosted by a man having the appearance of a tradesman, who informed him that Annette Vaudry had sailed a few hours previously for England. Important as was this intelligence, he was at the moment too much agitated to yield it the attention it deserved. Neither could he afterwards remember the man's name; nor, indeed, whether he had been told it. Mrs. Arlington, as well as himself, concluded he was a relative of Annette, deputed to communicate the news of her

departure; and the subject was with some effort dismissed from both their minds.

"Captain Duplessis," said Mrs. Arlington in a voice full of emotion, as she stood, late on the following evening, on the deck of a large fishing-vessel, hired at an enormous price—the produce of some jewels she had successfully concealed in her dress—"I have no words to express the deep gratitude I feel for your generous, your heroic kindness towards me; but if, when this unhappy war shall have terminated, you visit our shores" —— The deathlike paleness of the features of Duplessis flushed with a sudden hectic, and he gazed with burning eyes upon her face. "If," she continued, slightly averting her head—"if you should then visit England, be assured that nothing that I or my relatives could do to testify our esteem, our gratitude, our respect"——

A deep sigh arrested her words, and she paused in painful embarrassment. The sudden light had faded from the young officer's face, and he was again deadly pale. The coldness of the lady's manner, more than her words, had chilled and disenchanted him.

"A dream, madame," he rejoined in a low, sad voice, "in which it were mere folly to indulge. My best hope is to forget, if forgetfulness be yet possible, the brief, bright vision which has glanced across my path. Farewell! May all good angels guard and bless you!" He jumped into the boat which was in waiting alongside, and was swiftly rowed ashore. A few minutes after-

wards, the fisher-vessel was gliding down the Garonne on its course to the Bay of Biscay, where it was hoped a British vessel might be met with which would take Mrs. Arlington on board; but failing which, the master was bound, at all risks and hazards—so ran the bargain—to make for the nearest English port.

Duplessis watched the receding vessel as long as a speck of its white sails remained visible from the quiet, solitary shore. The scenery around, above him—the pale, silent town—the waving trees—the glancing river, gemmed with the diamond kisses of the glowing stars, reposed in the light, murmuring slumber of a bright southern winter night. Gradually it seemed that the calm beauty of the universe stole in upon and stilled the troubled beatings of his fevered heart and brain. But not from waving tree, nor glittering star-fire, nor glancing river, flowed that soothing calm. Its well-spring was in his own heart, and the holy peace of the exterior world but mingled with and heightened it. The poignant sense of pain and desolation which the lady's coldness, sweeping across his wounded spirit, had occasioned, yielded insensibly to the tranquillising, elevating consciousness of having fulfilled a great and holy duty. The day would come, was indeed, he felt, already dawning, when, like a hurt received by a veteran in some great battle, the agony of the wound forgotten, the scar would alone remain to testify that he had participated in the strife and victory. "Ay," he mentally exclaimed, as, on re-entering the town, a showy carriage, contain-

ing Tallien and the brilliant Dona Theresa, flashed by, "the time will come, triumphant lady, and that speedily —for this mad anarchy cannot long endure—when the false glare of a vain prosperity, by which you are now dazzled and misled, will vanish as suddenly as it has arisen, to be succeeded by black misfortune and disgrace. Then, O lady, will the deeds of mercy which you have scattered over your wild, eccentric path, alone remain to shine upon and cheer the else thick darkness. Be prodigal of them, lady, in these your days of power and pride, scatter them with unstinting hand; and then, when all else is lost to you, they will return and illumine with perennial radiance any lot, how dark soever, which may await you in this changing world."

III.

The man who accosted Duplessis, and announced Annette Vaudry's departure for England, was Pierre Duclos, a working jeweller by ordinary profession, but, since the Revolution had practically abolished those appendages to luxury and *cullotism*, a zealous public-safety-committee-man, at forty sous a day. His wife, Marie Duclos, was a distant relative of Annette; and it was consequently in his house that she sought shelter for herself and the child confided to her. Her fair-speaking relatives easily obtained the confidence of the simple-hearted woman; and Pierre readily undertook the very difficult, as well as perilous task of negotiating

her passage to England. The gold and jewels with which she had been intrusted, Annette, in the guileless pride of her heart, exhibited as an unmistakable proof of the trust reposed in her by the foreign lady whom she so loved and mourned. The glittering treasure elicited one irrepressible flash of hell-fire from Duclos' eyes; and then, as if afraid of betraying himself, he jumped up from his chair, and hastily quitted the room.

The only surviving child of Pierre and Marie Duclos was a pretty, interesting girl of about nine years of age, named Valérie. In her was centred all of kindliness of heart, all of healthy moral life which, long and impatiently-borne adversity, with other demoralising influences peculiar to the time, had left them. Valérie was the sole oasis which shone upon them from amidst the dreary sterility of the past, or relieved the bleak mistiness of the future—the only object which in this world or the next they contemplated with either joy, or hope, or fear. They had both—but the husband more especially, for in woman the divine instincts of faith and love are perhaps never wholly obliterated—accepted with sullen indifference the sad dogmas through which the fanatics of that period proffered to man a safe equality with brutes in lieu of a possibly-perilous immortality. These changes had been chiefly wrought in them since Annette had left Bordeaux. Had she been aware of her relatives' moral condition, she would in all probability have preferred taking up her abode with persons somewhat less untrammelled

with old-world prejudices than they. Pierre's look, when she displayed the money and precious stones, somewhat disquieted her, but the half-discovery came too late.

On the same night that Mrs. Arlington quitted the shores of France, and at about the same hour, Pierre and Marie Duclos sat down to a supper of much greater profusion than they had for several years been accustomed to. The husband ate heartily, but the wife, after one or two efforts to follow his example, pushed the piled plate from before her with an expression of impatience and disgust. The mind of Madame Duclos seemed, judging from her restless demeanour and changing countenance, strangely ill at ease. Presently she started up, and paced hurriedly up and down the apartment, pausing occasionally to listen at the door which shut in the stair leading to the room where slept Annette Vaudry, Valérie, and little Julia Arlington. She was rather a well-looking woman, of about six-and-thirty years of age; but the unquiet expression of her large, dark southern eyes too plainly intimated that peace dwelt not with the spirit which gleamed through them. At last she stopped in her agitated walk, hastily swallowed a draught of wine, sat down, and resumed the conversation her rising had interrupted in the same low undertone as before.

"What have you done with the—the *médecine*, Pierre?"

"Here it is, Marie. Believe me, it is the only genuine elixir for the woes of life, and silent, but unerring guide to the regions of eternal repose."

"Hush! Speak lower, Pierre. Annette is perhaps by this time awaké. I will step and see."

Madame Duclos was some time gone, and when she re-entered the room her face was paler, her agitation even more violent, than before. Her husband again handed her wine, which she eagerly swallowed. It appeared to somewhat calm her, and she sat down.

"*Must* this be done, Pierre? Is there no hope for us save in this dreadful deed?"

"None—none—none!" replied Duclos gloomily. "Even this supper has been purchased with part of the money given me to secure her passage. And what is there in such an act that should startle us? The guillotine daily shears away, amid the applause of all good patriots, the lives of scores of persons, unoffending, harmless, and innocent as she"——

"You should see Valérie, Pierre," said the wife, interrupting his scarcely-heeded reply—"you should see Valérie asleep with that beautiful child embraced in her white arms. Their sweet lips touch each other, and they look in the bright moonlight like two angelic spirits sent down from heaven to teach all who look upon them the loveliness of innocence and truth. Oh Pierre! you and I were children once, as pure, as innocent as they, and now—— O God, to think that Valérie, perhaps through our example, may become as wretched and as lost as we!"

"Is it not mainly for the sake of Valérie," rejoined Duclos, "that we have resolved upon the deed which you now so strangely boggle at? Would you see *her* houseless, a beggar, cast perhaps a few years hence upon the streets"——

"No—no—no! But oh, Pierre, if but a part of what used to be told us in the abolished churches should, after all, prove true, and this crime-purchased wealth become not a blessing, but a curse, not only to us, but to her!"

"Mere superstitious folly, Marie. I hoped these dreams of a barbarous age had been banished from the minds of all reasonable beings. Do you think the enlightened patriots now occupied in regenerating France have not well weighed all such matters in their powerful minds? What said Tallien but yesterday at the banquet of Fraternity:—'The journey of life is over a vast plain teeming with flowers and fruits, for the delight and sustenance of the wayfarers, who, if they are wise, will gather and enjoy them as quickly as they may; for ever nearer and nearer to them gather the moving sands of fate and chance, which a little sooner or a little later will inevitably roll over them, and of their graves make new and smoother paths for succeeding generations—all destined, like their predecessors, to flutter for a while in the sunshine, and then sink nto a dreamless slumber, from which no archangel's trump, as priests have fabled, shall ever waken them.'"

"Woe! woe! if it indeed be so, to the wayfarers—for those especially who are mothers, doomed never to behold again their little ones, untimely snatched from their embraces into eternal night, never, never, never to behold them more!"

"Ay, Marie, it is even so. The inscription placed over our new cemeteries—'DEATH IS AN ETERNAL SLEEP'—bids us enjoy"——

"The saddest, mournfullest sentence," interrupted Madame Duclos with tremulous tones, "ever written on the gate of death! It was not till the dread creed which it embodies had cankered itself into my heart and brain, that Marie and Edouard, though so long since laid in their quiet graves, really died to me"——

"Take another cup of wine, Marie," said Duclos, in his turn breaking in upon his partner's discourse: "you are not yourself to-night. There, that will do more to fortify you against imaginary terrors than all the preaching in the world. This philosophy, I say, this religion of men who refuse to be dupes, bids us enjoy, at every cost, the present life; commands us to seize, in the best way we can, all the means of happiness which chance may place within our reach. A golden opportunity now presents itself, and, thanks to our emancipation from childish prejudices, we shall seize it, and thus extricate ourselves, extricate Valérie, from the gulf of poverty into which we have fallen."

He paused, but, his wife not replying, he continued, still in the same low, cautious tones in which the con-

versation had been throughout maintained:—"The money entrusted to Annette, with the jewels, of the value of which you know I am a good judge, will amply suffice to establish us handsomely in business at Paris, as soon as order is restored, and then what but a life of comfort and luxury awaits us? Valérie, instead of being a miserable outcast, earning scanty bread, by miserable, ill-requited toil, will have her fine talents cultivated, and will shine forth an ornament of the circles she must otherwise serve for coarse food and insufficient raiment."

Madame Duclos' countenance gradually assumed, under the combined influence of the wine and her husband's sophistries, a less pallid and unquiet aspect. A silence of several minutes succeeded, broken at last by the wife—"She will not suffer much, Pierre?"

"Not at all: she will sleep, and not wake again—nothing more."

"Hélas! Only for Valérie: truly, as you say, this grinding burden of poverty — which the Revolution was to cure, but has not—becomes heavy and crushing in proportion to the number of loved ones who help to bear it. Pierre, promise me once more that Valérie shall never be corrupted—enlightened as I have been"——

"I do promise, Marie. Hark! you are called."

Madame Duclos rose and tottered towards the door. The summons was repeated, and she ascended the stairs. She soon reappeared.

"Annette is awake. The pain in her side is a little easier, but she wishes to take the medicine at once—in some wine."

"Good—excellent! Pour some into this cup. Morbleu! you waste it half: give it me."

"Pierre," said the wife in a hoarse whisper, "no harm must befall the child We will rear it tenderly"——

"As you will; but be quick."

Madame Duclos took the cup mixed by her husband, and made two or three steps towards the door, then stopped irresolutely, and replaced it on the table.

"I cannot give it her, Pierre: I should betray myself."

"Then place it by her side; that will do. You do not need a light"

The hellish errand was at last accomplished. The half-slumbering woman swallowed the potion, and then, murmuring thanks to the wretch, who watched her from the half-opened door, sank back upon the pillow Was it fancy, or did Valérie's soft eyes unclose, and for an instant rest upon her guilty, trembling mother? Duclos and his wife crept stealthily—as if they feared the very sound of their footsteps might betray them—to bed, to sleep, if sleep be possible.

The same silver glory of the night which diffused a healing calm over Duplessis' wounded spirit, and shed its holy, sanctifying light upon the chamber where In-

nocence and Death reposed, streamed into the room where Remorse and Crime crouched, shuddered, dreamed, only to light it up with a fiercer, brighter terror, in which shadows, woven of the murderers' labouring brain—indistinct indeed, but terrible—waved their serpent-hair, and shook their fiery whips! Oh, most unhappy pair! What if the sleep ye fondly deem eternal be broken by such dreams as these!

But the terrors of the night are past. It is broad, bright day: and the all-seeing heavens blab not to mortal ears of the deeds they have looked upon. The widowed Mrs. Arlington is fairly on her way to her distant, unchilded home: Duplessis is off to the northern frontier, and will soon be engaged in death-grapples with the foes of France: the deep waters of the Garonne float over the corpse of Annette Vaudry. Surely, then, thou enriched, triumphant Duclos, mayest safely laugh at the notion that there exists a Power capable of reuniting those wide-sundered strands, and weaving of them thy web of destiny!

IV.

Nine years of fratricidal strife had passed heavily away when the peace, or rather the truce of Amiens, afforded the wearied, trampled world a few months' breathing-time. Mrs. Arlington had remarried, and was now Lady Ormsby. Duplessis had attained the rank of general. Time had swept over both of them

with healing wings, assuaging the mother's grief for her child, supposed to have perished with Annette Vaudry at sea, and filling the aching void in the soldier's heart with a new idol—glory! But what had the strong hours done for the Duclos family?—what had the seasons in their change brought *them?*

All, it should seem, that, in the dark days of adversity, they had pined and sinned for—competence, wealth, luxury; the consideration and esteem of the world; a respected position in society—all these they possessed. M. Duclos, the goldsmith and jeweller of the Rue Vivienne, was recognised by the *élite* of the Paris *bourgeoisie* as a thoroughly respectable citizen; his wife as a pattern of grave, conjugal propriety: and his only child, the pretty light-hearted Valérie—already contracted to Auguste le Blanc, eldest son of the Sieur le Blanc of the Boulevard des Italiens, one of the richest notaries of Paris—as the most charming and amiable of daughters. Happiness, then, if happiness consist in the things they so eagerly desired, is obtained, however foully played for. One would suppose so; and yet it can scarcely be content and peace that have so early changed the thick, black tresses of the wife to scanty gray, and stamped those heavy furrows on the husband's haggard face! Why, too, do they start with such quick terror if strangers suddenly accost them? Do they tremble lest the Garonne should give up its dead—for how else can accusation reach them? "These fears," they continually repeat

to each other, "are childish and absurd. No eye but ours looked upon the deed; and the body of the victim has been long since resolved into the elements. Thus impenetrably shielded from retribution, why should we permit ourselves to be haunted by such shadowy terrors?" Why, indeed? There appeared no logical reason that it should be so; and yet those shadowy terrors, illogical as they may be, all their fine reasoning could not dissipate nor scare away. They, on the contrary, daily, nightly grew and strengthened; sat at table with them, accompanied them even in their noontide walks, crept with them to bed, suggesting such fantasies! . . . . Oh, Duclos, what were the inflictions of toil, hunger, cold, compared to the tortures of such nights as these!

The love of both father and mother for their graceful Valérie had also grown and strengthened, until it amounted almost to idolatry. The only happiness they knew—and that but fitful and evanescent—was in contemplating hers. Scrupulously had they concealed from her the creed of despair by which their own minds had been dwarfed and perverted—their own lives stained and debased. Valérie at least should have a future, if but an ideal one. Existence should not be with her an avowedly objectless journey ending in a tomb. So natively good and kind was the disposition of Valérie, that even the doting indulgence which anticipated and gratified every whim or wish she formed failed of corrupting her unselfish nature. Gentle, pious,

affectionate, gay-hearted, she shed a light of gladness around her which mitigated, if it could not subdue, the gloom which—Valérie's only grief — constantly enshrouded her parents.

The deep tenderness and love which Valérie had always manifested for the beautiful orphan, who had dwelt with them since the sad death of Annette Vaudry, was one of the most amiable traits of her character. Julia or Julie, as she was called—she passed with the world as Valérie's cousin—who was now more than twelve years of age, gave promise of a beauty as radiant and exquisite as that of her mother, and her talents for drawing, music, even dancing—that apparently intuitive faculty of Frenchwomen—were far superior to her own, but not one emotion of jealous inferiority ruffled the placid bosom of Valérie. On the contrary, one of her chief pleasures was to dilate upon the fresh graces and beauties which, according to her, were daily springing up and expanding in her beloved companion and protégée. Happy was it for Julie to be so loved by one so potent in the household as Valérie. Both husband and wife, but Pierre Duclos especially, instinctively dreaded and disliked her. "How," he would frequently mutter—"how can we hope for peace whilst that living memorial of the past haunts us with her accusing presence? If Valérie were not so bound up in her"—— And then evil thoughts would flit across his brain, analogous to the dark patches which hurry athwart a menacing sky, harbingers and portions of

the thick blackness which will soon shut out the heavens. The suggestions of his clouded mind did not as yet, fortunately, harden into shape and action; and Julie, nestled and sheltered in the arms of Valérie, slept in peace and safety.

Julie had been told by Valérie that she was the daughter of English parents of high degree, one of whom—so Annette Vaudry had said—was buried at Père la Chaise; and the other had perished by the guillotine at Bordeaux. One of the favourite haunts of the two friends was to that picturesque burial-garden, to shed tears and scatter *immortelles* upon an unmarked grave, which, from certain evidence extracted from the good-natured guardians of the place—not perhaps of much value in a court of law, but more than sufficient for minds willing to be deceived—they believed to be the earth's resting-place of Julie's father, Mr. A. More than the first letter of his name they knew not. If Annette had ever mentioned the name to Valérie, she had forgotten it. Monsieur and Madame Duclos of course affected equal ignorance. Indeed, any allusion to the subject was rigorously, and, even to Valérie, menacingly interdicted. The initial letter was found on the fly-leaf of an English Book of Common Prayer taken out of Annette's box, at the foot of some tender lines evidently addressed to her infant daughter by Julie's mother, previous to her setting out upon what they deemed had proved her fatal journey to Bordeaux. Those lines, now almost oblite-

rated by frequent tears—of little consequence, as every letter was deep graven upon Julie's heart and memory—were subscribed "Julia A." The brilliant castles in the air that Valérie would build for her young friend on returning from these votive excursions! How some day, now that peace was proclaimed, and in some way not very distinctly mapped out, Julie's grand relations were to be discovered. Julie, of course, proving to be one of the very grandest of grand Miladis, possessed, like all Miladis, according to juvenile French notions, of millions upon millions of guineas—those all-powerful guineas with which the terrible Pitt so cruelly beat and sank the French navies, and, worse than all, the gentle Valérie sighed to think, strove to blow up the First Consul—besides innumerable castles all now desolate, and waiting to fire off all their guns on their lost mistress's arrival. Then how, after Julie had taken possession, and been crowned a Miladi in Westminster Hall, or St. Paul's church—Valérie did not pique herself upon precise historical accuracy—she would return to delightful France, and build a splendid château near Paris, so as to be able to reside near that city of delights at least six months out of every year; and ultimately—there could be no doubt upon this point—marry the handsome son of the brave French officer—— Ah, if they only knew *his* name!—who, according to Annette, so gallantly, but, alas! so vainly, risked his life to save that of her mother! Such were Valérie's innocent

and unselfish day-dreams of Julie's future lot. On returning home one evening from this favourite walk, they found Monsieur and Madame Duclos in a state of great agitation; and the first address to them was a harsh command that, for the present at least, Julie should on no account leave the house without either Monsieur or Madame Duclos' especial permission, nor even enter the front shop. She must confine herself strictly to the back apartments and garden. This strange prohibition, dictated, they hinted, solely in Julie's interest, Valérie warmly but ineffectually remonstrated against, as an act of unjustifiable caprice and cruelty. For once her parents were deaf even to *her* pleadings; and, accompanied by Julie, she withdrew in sorrowful indignation to her chamber.

No wonder that Monsieur and Madame Duclos exhibited symptoms of unusual alarm and agitation. For some time past, the daily more and more striking resemblance of Julie to her mother—they had both seen her when before the revolutionary committee at Bordeaux — had given form and substance to the undefined terrors by which they were inexorably pursued; and an incident which occurred about half an hour previous to the return of Valérie and her companion from their evening walk had, like a flash of lightning suddenly revealing to a benighted traveller the abyss upon which he is advancing, placed in an instant before their eyes the extent and imminence of the peril by which they were menaced. General

Duplessis was returned to Paris, and had twice, on horseback, paced slowly before their shop, gazing in as he passed with an expression which sent their blood in tumultuous eddies through their veins. This officer, who, Duclos was aware, had been made prisoner by the English, but had strangely obtained his almost immediate release by exchange, had, several years before, made minute inquiries at Bordeaux, doubtless by the instigation of Madame Arlington, and had, in consequence, traced him to Paris, and there called upon him for explanations relative to the sailing of Annette Vaudry for England. The answers, long before prepared, had been apparently satisfactory; but what if the general—whom the peace had again brought to Paris, and who, being on the First Consul's staff, would doubtless remain there—chanced to see Julie? That, indeed, were ruin! Great numbers of English visitors were also crowding to France, and was it not probable, nay, almost certain, that Madame Arlington would come over and personally institute a more minute and searching investigation? And if Julie were seen and interrogated, what would become of the plausible story he had told of her embarkation with Annette in Jacques Bazire's vessel, fortunately lost with all hands on board in the very nick of time? The danger was palpable, imminent, and must, at all hazards and sacrifices, be provided against. In the meantime, one evident precaution suggested itself: Julie must be strictly confined within the house, at all

events until a renewal of the war—not a very remote probability, according to generally-accredited rumour—should again chase the English from the soil of France, and recall Duplessis to the frontiers.

The conference of Duclos and his wife was that night long and gloomy, and bitter words of reproach and recrimination, now no unusual occurrence, passed between them. "Safety alone in another crime, does he say?" murmured Madame Duclos as she left the room. "Alas! alas! a fresh serpent wreathed about the heart will yield peace as readily as a new crime will safety!"

"Oh, why do you weep, *chère mère?*" said Valérie, embracing her mother, who, thinking she slept, was bending over her in tearful agony. "Why, always when Julie and I sleep together, do you come in, separate us gently, but with averted head, as if you could not bear to see us slumbering in each other's arms, and then silently weep, as if your very heart would break? Often, often, mother, have I watched you whilst pretending to sleep. Oh, mother, tell me, tell your own Valérie, what hidden grief it is that so disquiets you?"

"Am I not soon to lose you, Valérie?" replied the agitated woman: "is not that a cause for tears?"

"Lose me, mother! Ah, now you are jesting. Is, then, the Boulevard des Italiens so far from the Rue Vivienne? And must not a long twelvemonth elapse before even that slight separation can take place? You, too, kind and dear mother, who have permitted Auguste

to solicit his father, because you think your health is failing, to abridge that delay one-half. Oh no, it is not that! Forgive me, dear mother, if I offend you, for you have often bidden me never to mention the subject, but I remember that when Annette Vaudry came to our house in the Faubourg of Bordeaux, that"——

"What, what do you remember?" gasped Madame Duclos as her daughter paused, frightened at the wild expression of her mother's face.

"Only, dear mother—oh, do not look so strangely at me, I do not mean to offend you; but I remember how poor, how very poor we then were, and I have sometimes thought that father may not now be so rich as he is supposed to be."

"Nonsense, my child: your father is even richer than he is believed to be. Now, love, go to sleep: good-night;" and, kissing her daughter fervently, the mother left the room.

Valérie, as she sank back with a sigh upon her pillow, slightly disturbed by the motion the sleeping Julie, who turned murmuringly towards her. "How beautiful she is!" thought Valérie; "and as true and gentle as beautiful. But, ah me! I fear neither father nor mother loves her as she deserves to be loved; and when I am gone, perhaps—— At all events I shall be always near her; and Auguste says, if she is unhappy, she shall come and live with us. Dear Auguste!"—and, with the thoughts suggested by that name mantling about her heart, the gentle maiden sank to sleep.

V.

Time wore on; the truce of Amiens was rapidly drawing towards a close, and Duclos' long ill-humour was sensibly abating, when one day, just as he was leaving his counting-house to partake of dinner, an English lady and gentleman, evidently persons of condition, entered the shop, accompanied by General Duplessis. "Is the master of this establishment within?" demanded that officer of one of the assistants. He was answered in the affirmative. "Then have the goodness to inform him that General Duplessis wishes to see him."

Lucky for Duclos was it that he had arisen from his seat, and approached the window overlooking the shop, just as the strangers entered. He thus obtained a few minutes' time to rally his startled energies. He recognised Julie's mother in an instant. Time had not in the slightest degree dimmed that brilliant loveliness; and the shade of melancholy regret which rested changefully upon it, but increased its fascination. Duclos intuitively guessed the errand of his ominous visitors. "They had doubtless being making renewed inquiries at Bordeaux. Yet what had he to fear? What evidence could be brought against him? The jewels had been all long since reset in a manner to defy recognition, and disposed of. Detection by that means was impossible. Why, then, need he disquiet himself? There was no cause for apprehension--none, positively none, if Julie

could be kept out of sight. There lay the peril: he had long felt so; and, but for Valérie and his panic-stricken wife, would have long since"——

The entrance of the shopman to announce the general's message interrupted his hurried soliloquy. "Tell him I will wait on him immediately," replied Duclos, without turning his face to the man. He then went to a cupboard, poured out, with trembling hands, a large glass of spirits, and hastily swallowed it. Colour came gradually back to his pallid cheek, and he walked with tolerably steady steps into the shop.

"We wish to speak with you privately, Monsieur Duclos," said the general.

Duclos immediately led the way to his counting-house. He placed three chairs for Lord and Lady Ormsby and the general, and remained standing himself, as if respectfully awaiting their commands.

"Monsieur Duclos," said the general with brusque military curtness, "you told me, when I called on you three years ago, that Annette Vaudry, with this lady's daughter, embarked at Bordeaux for England in Jacques Bazire's vessel, which, past question, you well knew foundered in the bay. Now we have every reason to believe that this story of yours is absolutely false."

"False, General Duplessis!"

"False, Monsieur Duclos! You told me you paid the large sum agreed upon for the passage-money to Jacques Bazire the day before he sailed. Now his

wife persists that she never heard of any negotiation by any person with her husband for such a purpose; that when he sailed he had no intention whatever of going to England; and that, moreover, the stores on board were nothing like sufficient for such a voyage."

"The negotiation, general, was necessarily, as you must be aware, strictly private and confidential. Besides, Jacques Bazire was, if possible, to put his passengers on board a cruiser in the bay, then covered with them."

"Plausible, plausible, Monsieur Duclos," returned the general, with the same rude curtness, "but not at all convincing to me, especially accompanied as it is by that nervous twitching at the corners of your mouth."

"General, you insult me."

"Perhaps so. Moreover, Bazire's family persist that, if he had received such a sum of money as you say was paid to him, they must have known of it. He would not have taken it with him to sea: it is absurd to suppose so; and his family, at his death, were in a state of poverty almost amounting to destitution. You perceive, Monsieur Duclos, that a mystery hangs over the affair which you would do wisely to clear up; otherwise"——

At this moment the door conducting to the inner apartment opened, and Madame Duclos, utterly ignorant of *who* it was detaining her husband from his dinner, entered to remind him that it had been for

some time waiting for him. "Pierre," she began, with the handle of the half-opened door in her hand, "the sooner you can"—— when her eyes fell upon Lady Ormsby and General Duplessis. The words died on her tongue, and she stood gazing upon them in terrified amazement.

"What is there in this lady to scare you so, good woman?" said the general, after a minute's pause.

Madame Duclos did not answer, but her bosom heaved tumultuously, and she caught at the door-post with her disengaged left hand for support.

"Marie," said Duclos, hurriedly approaching her, himself shaking with nervous terror, "I will come to you almost immediately."

"Yes—yes—yes," gasped his wife, partially recovering herself. "I know—I understand—I"—— And, with a great effort, she tottered back into the passage, closing the door after her.

"Very singular behaviour of your wife this, Monsieur Duclos," said General Duplessis, eyeing him sternly.

Duclos, after a few moments, stammered something about his wife being subject to fits; unheeded, however, by the general, who was conversing with Lord and Lady Ormsby in low and earnest tones. Duclos stood leaning with his arms upon his desk in a tumult of conflicting terrors.

"Monsieur Duclos," said General Duplessis, turning towards him, "it is right I should inform you that it is this lady's impression, I should rather say her *hope*,

that Annette Vaudry, aided by yourself, has concealed herself, with the child confided to her, in order to be able to retain the very large amount of property imprudently intrusted to her. If this be so, I am desired to say that, if the child be only restored, no harm shall happen to either of you, no question be asked respecting that property; and that a further large sum shall be paid *you*, if, by your means, the recovery of Mademoisllle Arlington should be effected."

Duclos was about to reply with renewed assurance —perceiving, as he instantly did, by the nature of the proposition, that neither Lady Ormsby nor the general had fallen upon the right scent—when a voice was heard from the inner apartments calling for assistance to Madame Duclos. It was Julie's voice; and at the same moment a light step was heard swiftly approaching along the passage towards the counting-house. Should it be Julie! Duclos shook like an aspen, and his very hair seemed to lift itself with sympathetic terror. The door opened: it was Valérie! The reaction of his blood flushed his face purple. "Well—well," he gasped.

"Mamma has fallen down in a fit, and blood is gushing from her mouth. Oh come at once, papa."

Lord and Lady Ormsby rose immediately. "We shall see you again to-morrow, Monsieur Duclos," said General Duplessis. The three terrible visitors then withdrew, and Duclos, leaning heavily on his daughter's arm, tottered to his wife's assistance.

The next fortnight was spent in vain attempts on the part of General Duplessis and Lord and Lady Ormsby to frighten or bribe Duclos into compliance with their wishes. The jeweller had recovered his momently-shaken assurance, and, confident in their inability to bring any tangible accusation against him, defied alike menaces and prayers. He even threatened in his turn to prosecute them for defamation, should either presume to whisper anything against his fair fame. Duclos was the more emboldened in this course, from the certainty that now existed of the immediate rupture of the truce of Amiens, which must necessarily relieve him at once of the presence, not only of Lord and Lady Ormsby, but of the far more formidable Duplessis. Be not so jubilant, O Duclos; the shadow of death, in which you have so long walked, still points, be assured, with its unerring finger, towards a felon's bloody grave!

"I quite agree with you, Henri," said M. de Liancourt, to whom his nephew had been relating, during dinner, the substance of his fruitless interviews with the jeweller of the Rue Vivienne. "Much graver suspicion than Lady Ormsby seems to entertain attaches to this Duclos, notwithstanding his affectedly-indignant protestations and plausibilities. I have seen the daughter of whom you speak at Le Blanc's, a patient of mine. His son, Auguste, is, I believe, contracted to her. She is a fair, graceful girl, of something more, perhaps, than eighteen years of age."

"Yes."

"She was no doubt living with them at Bordeaux and, if so, must have seen and probably conversed with Annette Vaudry."

"If foul play has been, as I suspect, practised towards the woman, that girl is, I am certain, ignorant of it. Her brow is too candid, too open and unclouded"——

"That I do not at all dispute, Henri," interrupted the uncle; "but she might unconsciously, if adroitly questioned, make revelations that would perhaps put us on the right track. Depend upon it, if Annette Vaudry was destroyed for the sake of the property entrusted to her, this young woman, then a girl of about nine years of age, must have been hoodwinked by some story or other, differing in all probability from that which these people would palm off upon you and Lord and Lady Ormsby."

"Possibly; but how to question her?"

"Leave that to me. I was at Le Blanc's yesterday, and I remember hearing that Valérie Duclos was to be there to-morrow, to witness the troops file past to the review in the Champ de Mars. I will drop in, *par hasard* as it were, and seize a favourable opportunity of putting a few leading questions."

"Do so: and yet it seems hardly fair to render a child instrumental in her parent's destruction."

"Nonsense! Consult the jurisconsults upon the subject, and you will alter your opinion. But to

change the topic: is it certain that war is about to recommence?"

"No question of it. The sword of Marengo will cut the knot which double-tongued diplomacy but the more entangles."

"*Peut-être!* But the sword, you will please to remember, is also double-edged, not unfrequently smiting the smiter. Did you notice—but of course you did, for with all your philosophy you see, when she is present, nobody else—how the eyes of the proud English beauty flashed with indignation and defiance as the First Consul poured forth his fiery denunciations of England to Lord Whitworth? No chance for you there, Henri, even were she not married to Lord Ormsby."

"Perfectly true, De Liancourt, and happily, for all you may fancy, I have long ceased even to wish that it were otherwise. The enthusiastic passion with which she inspired me, and but for which I doubt that the star of the Legion of Honour would now glitter on my breast"——

"It is true, then," interrupted the physician, "what Murat told Josephine the other day, that a lady's glove used to occupy the place now covered by that new bauble?"

"Perhaps so, though Murat was but a puppy to babble of it there. But what I would say is, that the delirious passion I once felt is sobered down to a sentiment of calm admiration and respect, illuminated and

sanctified by the proud consciousness that I once rendered her, at some hazard to myself, an essential service; a service, however, which she more than repaid by her prompt and successful exertions, through her influential relatives, to extricate me from an English prison, and restore me to freedom and a brilliant career in life."

"I am glad to hear you speak so, Henri, for I was afraid the wound cankered still. You reaped the reward of a generous action; and I firmly believe, though I don't go to church quite so often as I might, that there are few seeds cast upon this field of time which do not bring forth fruits, each after its kind, in due season. I greatly respect the lady myself; and we must endeavour, short as the time is, to discover and restore the lost child. *En attendant*, it is time for you to be off to Malmaison, and for me to attend to my *clientèle*.

VI.

The gay city of Paris awoke the next day in the clear splendour of a brilliant morning of spring, and the feelings of the excited people were in harmonious accordance with the delightful season of flowers and sunshine. The streets, the boulevard, the squares, as the day wore on, flashed in the varied splendour of military pomp and pride. There was to be a grand review of troops in the Champ de Mars by the First Consul, followed by a ball in the evening at the

Tuileries; and brilliant equipages, crowded with bevies of fair women, and mounted officers, fiery-hot with speed, as if bound upon a world's deliverance, dashed incessantly along in all the glory of lace, feathers, and stars. France was again about to cast her brilliant and victorious sword into the balance wherein trembled the destinies of nations; and who could doubt that a long career, thick strewed with wreaths and stars, and ending with a conqueror's diadem, awaited the as-yet-uncrowned chief of glorious France?

The British Embassy had received their passports, and were hastily preparing for departure. Lord and Lady Ormsby intended to journey in Lord Whitworth's suite; especially as there were already whispers abroad of a design, afterwards carried into effect, of arresting the numerous English persons then in France, and detaining them as prisoners of war. General Duplessis had made his final adieus to Lord Ormsby and his disconsolate lady, fervently promising at the same time that no effort should be spared to effect the discovery of the lost child.

The sunshine and joyaunce of the day penetrated and lighted up with strange gaiety the sombre abode of the Ducloses. Both husband and wife appeared in unwonted spirits, almost cheerful indeed. The danger, long dreaded, had been met, and successfully evaded. Lady Ormsby had either already left Paris, or was immediately about to do so, her suspicions apparently removed, and convinced, it should seem, of the fruitless

ness of any further search for her daughter: Duplessis, attached to the Consul's staff, would leave the next day for the Grand Army: there would now be ample leisure to devise some mode of safely disposing of the sole source of future danger—Julie. Valérie would soon be happily married, and then, all necessary precautions taken, they might hope to sleep again at nights, and really enjoy the wealth they had purchased at so dear a price.

"Quick, Marie," exclaimed Duclos, addressing his wife, "this is a great holiday for us as well as for the rest of the world. The carriage will be at the door in a few minutes. A few rides in such glorious weather will soon restore your strength. The evil day, Marie, is past. This Providence, whose mysterious fingers you began to fear were busy sharpening the axe for our destruction, has, you see, either bungled the business, *or*, which is more probable, has never heard of our little affair!"

Madame Duclos sighed, and changed the conversation to a more agreeable topic.

"Valérie wishes to take Julie with her to the Le Blancs. There is no danger, Pierre, now in complying with her wish. The lady is as good as gone, and Duplessis will be too busy to heed anything but the manœuvres and the Consul."

"*Peste!*" exclaimed Duclos, in an irritated tone; "I wish Valérie had not taken such a fancy to that girl."

At this moment Valérie, charmingly dressed in

white, and her hair, as became a youthful *fiancée*, jewelled with pale spring flowers, entered the room with the elastic step and joyous aspect of youth and happy love. The parents looked with delighted eyes upon their graceful child. No wonder Auguste le Blanc should so eagerly petition for an earlier day than had been at first named for his union with that fair girl, so lustrous in her young joy and innocence!

"What do you say, *mon père;* that you wish I did not love so much our beautiful Julie? Ah, you cannot be serious!"

Pierre Duclos kissed the fair, clear brow of his daughter, and, evading her question, told her she might take Julie to the Le Blancs with her.

"Thanks, thanks, dear papa! O jour trois foix heureux! Adieu, *maman;*" and, embracing her mother, the light-hearted girl flew up stairs again, to hurry and assist Julie in her toilet.

The pomp and circumstance of the grand review had passed and repassed before M. Le Blanc's house, and the shadows of the trees which dotted the Boulevard had begun sensibly to lengthen, when M. de Liancourt, with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, quietly glided into the apartment, and mingled with the gay party assembled there. Valérie and Auguste le Blanc were seated on an ottoman, somewhat apart from the rest of the company. There was a roseate blush on the maiden's cheek, and her lips were parted

with a gratified smile; for her ear had been drinking in her lover's felicitations on having at last obtained his parents' consent to their more speedy union. Suddenly Julie, who was standing at the window, turned round and called Valérie to witness the passage of the First Consul, who, surrounded by a brilliant staff, was galloping towards the Tuileries. The action gave M. de Liancourt, who had been admiring the graceful elegance of her youthful figure, and the perfect Grecian outline of her head, a full view of her features; and he started with uncontrolled surprise, "It is doubtless, then, as we suspected," he mentally exclaimed. "Annette has been sacrificed, and the child by some caprice preserved!"

The company began to separate, and De Liancourt, feeling he had not a moment to lose, approached Valérie.

"Paris, mademoiselle, has exhibited a brilliant spectacle to-day."

"*Magnifique!* No place in the world, Auguste says, could present scenes so imposing and so gorgeous!"

"Auguste is right. In only one feature is this glorious Paris, in my opinion, deficient: the river is scarcely worthy of the splendid quays and bridges which border and span it. If one of our southern rivers, the flashing Garonne for instance, were substituted for the Seine, Paris would be perfect!"

"The Garonne! Oh yes—how well I remember

that glorious river. I am, you know, a native of the Gironde—of the immediate neighbourhood of Bordeaux, in fact."

"Of Bordeaux! Then perhaps, my dear young lady," rejoined M. de Liancourt in a low, caressing voice, "either you or your parents may be able to give me some information respecting a person I am in search of, and of whom that young lady," pointing to Julie, "forcibly reminds me. This way, if you please, mademoiselle. Don't be jealous, Auguste; I will not detain your charming mistress more than a minute or two."

"If I am not greatly mistaken, my dear Mademoiselle Duclos," continued M. de Liancourt in the same silvery, insinuating tone, as soon as they had reached a recess at the further end of the apartment, "you can afford me information which will greatly increase the marriage-portion your worthy father means to bestow upon you. That young lady, Julie you call her, do you know anything of her parents?"

"Alas, yes, monsieur! Her mother, an English lady, an *employée* of the terrible Pitt, was guillotined at Bordeaux. Her father died in Paris, and was buried, Annette told me, at Père la Chaise."

"Annette Vaudry?"

"The same: you knew her then?"

"Yes. What has become of her?"

Valérie hesitated. Her father and mother had solemnly enjoined her never to speak of Annette, or

she would endanger not only their safety, but that of Julie, who might be seized, and perhaps sacrificed, as the child of a foreigner convicted of crimes against the Republic. For the same reason she knew her father had privately interred the body of Annette. But the "days of the Terror" had been long since past; and people now said that the Republic itself was about to be quietly got rid of. There could be no danger now; and if dear Julie could be benefited by any revelation she might make, restored to her relatives maybe, just, too, at the time when her own marriage would deprive the beautiful orphan of her best friend——

"Why do you hesitate, my dear young lady?" said De Liancourt soothingly, and as if he had divined her thoughts. "Would you not, if you could, promote the interests of your young friend?"

"Oh yes, indeed. Well, then, Annette Vaudry died at our house in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux. Mamma gave her some medicine, which she desired should be obtained, and poor Annette never woke again after taking it. I slept with Julie in the same room, and chanced to wake up just as mamma had placed it by her side. My father buried her privately, for fear of those terrible revolutionists."

"Is this all you know, mademoiselle?" said the physician with averted head and in an agitated voice.

"Yes: except that in Julie's *livre de prières*—an English book—there are some lines addressed to her by her mother, signed Julia A."

"Enough, mademoiselle," said De Liancourt, turning again towards Valérie: "I am satisfied. You will be rejoiced to hear that I have every reason to believe I know the family to which your friend belongs. It is a very distinguished one. But as, mademoiselle, I *may* be mistaken, it will be better, in order that no possibly false expectations may arise, not to mention the matter at present either to her or to Monsieur Duclos. Adieu, mademoiselle; I shall see you again perhaps this evening, at all events to-morrow."

"The infamous wretches!" murmured De Liancourt as he reached the street. "I pity this poor girl though sincerely; but it cannot be helped. Let me see: Miladi Ormsby and her husband are, I daresay, gone by this time; and where the deuce to see Duplessis now? *Allons*, if I can find nobody else, a commissary of police is always to be had. But I doubt even now that we shall be able to convict the miscreants."

Valérie was overjoyed that her dear Julie would be restored at last to her country and friends. Her own happiness rendered her doubly generous. The contrast between her own felicity and Julie's adverse lot would no longer chequer and rebuke her joy in her own prospects. And what gladsome tidings she had to communicate to her parents! The consent of the Le Blancs to her more speedy union with Auguste, which she knew they both, but her mother especially, so much desired; and the discovery—for Valérie would not en-

tertain, for all Monsieur de Liancourt's warning, any doubt on the subject—of Julie's relatives. Rich milords no doubt, else why had an addition to her marriage-portion been hinted at? What a day of joy!—what motives for thanksgiving! "Auguste," she added aloud, her sweet eyes humid with emotion, and placing her hand frankly in his, "we will to church at early service to-morrow morning; it is quietest then, and my heart, *bien aimé*, is full."

"When Valérie and Julie arrived at home, neither Monsieur nor Madame Duclos, nor any of the household, had returned from the Champ de Mars. They were both tired, Julie especially, and Valérie proposed that they should rest themselves, before changing their dresses, on the *canapé* or large sofa in the alcove at the end of the *salon*. She wished her mother to see the rich white Brussels lace veil Madame le Blanc had presented her with, previous to taking it off. They lay down on the canapé, Julie encircled in the arms of Valérie, and her drooping head reclined upon her shoulder, Valérie having first drawn and carefully closed the thick curtains, which, as is frequently the case in French houses, divided the alcove—occasionally used as a bedroom—from the rest of the apartment. "They will think we are not returned, *chère* Julie; and we shall afford them an agreeable surprise in more senses than one." Julie soon fell asleep in her friend's embrace, and Valérie contemplated with tender admiration the sweet features of the beautiful girl,

kindled into almost seraphic loveliness by the golden sunset, which streamed in through the open casement. "If papa and mamma could see her now," she murmured, "surely they must love her and treat her kindly when I am gone, should Monsieur de Liancourt's anticipation prove illusive. I will show her to them as she is."

VII.

For about half an hour no sound was heard in the house but the soft lullaby sung by the gentle and happy Valérie over the angel sleeping in her arms. At length a key turned harshly in the lock of the front door: Valérie knew it was her parents, as the servants of the establishment would enter by the back-way, and she instantly ceased her song, the last she was ever destined to pour forth on earth! Monsieur and Madame Duclos, having carefully refastened the door behind them, slowly ascended the stairs, and entered the salon.

"They are not returned," said Duclos, in a querulous voice, as he supported his wife's feeble steps towards a couch. "Sit down, and let us talk over affairs quietly, now that we have a few minutes to ourselves. In the first place, what a dusty, scorching, altogether vexatious day it has been!"

"How Duplessis glared upon us, Pierre, as he rode by!"

"He did. There's mischief in that man; but I tell you, Marie—and some decision *must* be come to—the only instrument which he can wield to our injury is that wretched Julie. Would that she were in the same grave with Annette Vaudry!"

"Oh, Pierre, would that I, would that you, had never entered the path which has conducted us to this fearful strait! That we had died, if need be, of hunger and cold, rather than have purchased this living death by that inhuman deed!"

"The past, Marie, cannot be recalled."

"Alas no! but it may perhaps be partially even yet atoned for. Let the lady have her child, and this miserable wealth too, if she will, which neither cheers, nor warms, nor helps us."

"Why do you persist, woman," cried Pierre Duclos fiercely, "in these eternal and unavailing lamentations? They weary me. After all, it was your hand that administered the poison to Annette, not mine."

"And do *you* reproach me, Pierre, with the crime which you suggested, counselled, urged me to commit? Did you not mix the fatal cup, and, spite"——

"Silence, woman! Hark! some one is knocking at the front street door!"

They paused to listen, and, as they did so, the curtain which shrouded the alcove suddenly opened in the centre, and Valérie, pale as despair, rigid as death, stood before them!

Had the earth suddenly yawned beneath their feet,

and displayed the nethermost abyss, the horror of that moment could not have been surpassed. There stood glaring at each other those three unfortunates—stunned, overwhelmed, conscious only that a universe had crumbled at the feet of each, and that all for which they had lived, toiled, sinned, hoped, and loved, was lost! lost! lost! for ever lost!

"Valérie!" at length gasped Duclos, faintly, recovering from the shock, and staggering towards her with outstretched arms. "We did but jest, Valérie—but jest, dear Valérie—nought else"——

"Approach me not!" shrieked the wretched girl, shrinking with horror from him. "Touch me not! O God! God! God!" she continued, tossing her arms wildly in the air, "would that I had ne'er been born!"

The knocking at the outer door was repeated louder and more imperatively than before.

"Hark!" she exclaimed, with frenzied eagerness; "hark! the ministers of vengeance are already at your heels. Fly, fly, wretched man! Fly, O wretched mother, from the doom about to burst upon you."

"You rave, Valérie! We did but jest, I tell you; and, even were it otherwise, what evidence can be adduced"——

"Listen, murderer!" cried the maddened girl, springing forward and grasping him by the wrist, and at the same time casting off Julie, who, terrified and bewildered, clung to her gown. "Listen! *I, I,* your daughter, your Valérie, have betrayed you to the

scaffold; have repeated the whole hideous lie which you palmed off upon me to De Liancourt; told him that *I* saw the fatal cup administered to Annette! Oh, now I comprehend it all, and a thousand things beside, so dark and bewildering before! And I tell you he is already at the door with the officers of justice!"——

Again the thundering summons echoed through the house, and a stern voice was heard to exclaim, "Ouvrez! De par la loi!"

"Mother, you hear!" shrieked Valérie, frantically clasping her mother's knees; "you hear they demand admittance in the name of the law! Fly, fly from the scaffold your own child has raised for you!"

The mother moved not, spoke not. The fascination of sudden terror held her rooted to the spot in dumb amazement.

Once more the stern summons was repeated, and then followed the rending and crashing of wood. They were breaking down the door.

A wild imprecation burst from Duclos as he glared bewilderedly round, as if in search of some means of defence or escape. His brain was in a whirl; and he could no longer calculate or reason upon how far Valérie *could* have committed him.

"Silence, Pierre!" exclaimed Madame Duclos, recovering her speech, "and, if you can, save yourself! Here, through this open casement! The next house is empty, and you can pass along as you did yesterday in chase of the bird. The opening between

the houses is not wide. Hasten, *my* hour is come, but you may yet escape. Imbecile," she continued with bitter emphasis, as her eye marked Duclos' progress along the sloping roof; "he does not even yet recognise the hand that has crushed us beneath the very idol we had set up in his stead. Ah," she exclaimed with a sudden shriek, "he has missed the leap! O God, forgive him!" She turned from the dread sight, sick to death, and, as she fell into her daughter's outstretched arms, the life-blood jetted forth in a copious and rapid stream. At the same instant the door burst open, and the room was filled by the officers of justice, followed by De Liancourt, Duplessis, and Lord and Lady Ormsby.

An hour afterwards, Valérie was alone with her mother. A confession drawn up by the commissary of police, more for the sake of establishing the identity of Julia Arlington than for aught else, had been signed by the dying woman; and Julia, obliged to be torn from her beloved friend's arms by force, was already on her road to England.

No sound was heard in the room save the ticking of the *pendule*, reminding the expiring sinner how rapidly the few remaining moments left to her were passing away. "The foreign lady, Valérie," she murmured, "said, did she not, that she would provide for and shelter thee?"

"Yes; but oh, my mother! think not of me—I shall

need no shelter—but of yourself think! oh think whilst it is yet time!" Valérie held a crucifix before the swiftly-glazing eyes of her dying parent: she did not appear to heed it; but at last a flash, as of parting intelligence, beamed forth from her upwardly-directed eyes; her hands were feebly joined together, and, faintly murmuring, "Pardon, Dieu juste et tout-puissant, pardon!" she sank back, and expired.

The fall of Duclos was partially broken by an instinctive clutch at a flag hung out in token of rejoicing from one of the windows of the house towards which he had leapt. It was rent away by his weight, but the violence of his descent was materially arrested; and he fell, stunned, maimed, bleeding, but still alive, upon the pavement. A number of passers-by instantly gathered round; and, whilst they were debating what had best be done with the sufferer, officers of police hurried up, and Duclos, still unconscious, was carried to a fiacre, and driven off to prison. Arrived there, a surgeon examined his hurts, prescribed the necessary remedies for reducing the swellings of his broken limbs, and, without pronouncing any opinion upon the probable ultimate result, withdrew till the morning; and Duclos, who had fully recovered his senses, was alone with the dark silence.

Alone, but for the thronging shapes which his disordered imagination conjured out of the thick blackness by which he was surrounded: mocking fiends that hissed in his shrinking ears all that he might have been

—all that he now was—all that might in the future, in the great "perhaps," await him. "Can it be," murmured the despairing wretch, pressing his outspread hands upon his eyes and forehead, as if to shut out those torturing fantasies, and still the palpitation of his throbbing brain—"can it be that the old creed of a superintending Providence is, after all, true? The grave has not indeed given up its dead to confront and convict me; and yet how strangely has vengeance, perhaps death! dogged at my heels, and at last surprised and clutched me! No, no, no! it is impossible: it must be a mere dream of dotards! Life, life! this beloved life! to which one clings so eagerly even in the last extremity! Life, the crowning fact and achievement of a universe of atoms, have I not heard and read a thousand and a thousand times, is but the necessary result of a particular organisation of senseless matter, which destroyed, disorganised, life perishes necessarily and eternally! . . . . The reasoning seems hardly so clear now as it once did. There should be priests of unbelief appointed; salaried professors of the creed of annihilation to sustain and console their votaries in these cold, dark moments."

The entrance of two persons with the embrocations and other appliances ordered by the surgeon interrupted his troubled communings. Their task occupied a considerable time; at the end of which an opiate was administered to the patient, and he sank into uneasy slumber.

He was awoke in the cold gray light of the morning by the entrance of a young man, one of the surgeon's assistants, with whom he had been slightly acquainted. His mind was calmer now; the agonizing pain of his wounds had entirely left him, and renewed hopes of life, of escape from the meshes of the blind, if iron law, flushed his haggard cheeks with a faint hectic, and partially relit his sunken eyes.

"Courage, Monsieur Duclos!" exclaimed the young man; "courage, mon ami. This little affair may not have so very bad a termination after all. Monsieur Duval will be here in about an hour, and the operation will be over in a twinkling."

"Operation!"

"Parbleu! it is your only chance! Ah ca," continued the custom-hardened student, coolly lighting a cigar, and entirely heedless of his auditor's consternation, "that was an awkward business to come to light so unexpectedly; but as you are rich, and can fee the lawyers well, I think you have still a chance if you survive the operation. There is no *corpus delicti;* and whether your daughter's evidence, supported by Madame Duclos' dying confession, will remedy that defect, is, I should say, though I am not much versed in such matters, a nice point—a very nice point indeed."

"My wife!" gasped Duclos. "Is Marie dead?"

"Parbleu, to be sure she is; and here," added the young gentleman with a very discontented air, as he extinguished his cigar, and thrust what remained of it

into his pocket, "comes Monsieur Duval nearly an hour before his time."

"Is amputation inevitable?" demanded Duclos in a faint voice, as he watched the surgeon examine and count the bright instruments which one of the young men that accompanied him was ranging on a table that had been brought into the cell.

"I will tell you directly," replied the surgeon coldly, as, after ascertaining that nothing had been forgotten, he approached the pallet, and removed the bedclothes. The examination lasted but a few seconds. The covering was replaced, and M. Duval looked with stern meaning in the patient's face.

"There will be no operation required, Monsieur Duclos. Mortification, as I apprehended, has already supervened, and you have but a few hours to live."

A cry of uttermost despair burst from the miserable man as he sprang up in the bed, and glared like a wild animal at bay at the unmoved surgeon.

"Edouard, put the instruments carefully up. Shall I send you a priest, Monsieur Duclos?" Duval added with a slight sneer. "They are re-established, you know."

The only answer was a yell of agony from the wretched being, as he fell back on his pillow, and buried his face in the bedclothes. A minute afterwards, Duclos was again alone with the dread silence, and within the now visible shadow of death. The shadow grew and deepened, and in a few hours the silence of mortality had become eternal.

"A terrible but not utterly hopeless parting of an immortal, but stained and defaced soul," writes De Liancourt in his diary, from which much has been already quoted, "for there mingled with his dark fancies wailing expressions of repentance and remorse, and trembling hope, awakened doubtless by the tones of a sweet angel voice which in those last moments, as throughout his life, alone had power to soothe and calm his gloomy and perturbed spirit."

Auguste Le Blanc, ignorant of the calamity that had befallen him, repaired in the morning to the early service of the church of Saint Rocque. Valérie had been there, the old *quêteuse* told him, about an hour before, had said her prayers, and departed. With a beating heart the lover hastened to the Rue Vivienne. He did not see Valérie; but, as he turned homewards with dizzy brain and reeling step, he no longer wondered that the flowers and blossoms, worn yesterday with so much modest pride, were now scattered, faded, and scentless at the feet of the Christ. The world, he felt, had closed on Valérie.

Even so! Within a month of the death of her parents, Valérie Duclos entered a convent of the strictest order, distant about twenty miles from Paris. The property her father died possessed of was transferred to one of the Paris hospitals.

"I have frequently attended," remarks De Liancourt, "the chapel of the Benedictine Convent when it was opened upon occasions of high church festival, attracted

chiefly, if not solely, by the interest excited in me by the gentle, pure-minded daughter of Duclos. I seldom saw her, and but once, I think, spoke to her; but I could always recognise the tones of her sweet, patient voice in the beseeching choral harmonies which at intervals of the service arose from the veiled nuns; and I knew that the winged canticle, as it went up to heaven, ever bore with it the soul-supplication of that meek, guileless, trusting child for the guilty, but still loved, authors of her being. Long after the public worship had concluded, the silent prayer ascended from the self-immolated votary, kneeling in unclouded faith, hope, charity, before the altar of the Saviour, whose loving, pierced hands are, as she believed, ever stretched forth to bind up the broken heart, to heal the bruised spirit. I was present on the day when Valérie, having concluded her novitiate, finally separated herself from the world. The irrevocable words were pronounced amidst the hush of a numerous congregation, attracted by the sad story of her trials and her virtues; and I, for one, felt that a purer, a holier sacrifice had never been offered on the altars of the religion of sorrow, of hope, and love."

VIII.

About eleven years after these events, and only two days after peace had again unsealed the ports of France, an English travelling-carriage, containing Lord and Lady Ormsby and Miss Arlington, was driving with

hot speed along one of the principal highways of that country. It drew up at the gate of a convent.

"Am I too late?" said the younger lady, addressing the superior of the convent, who had been apparently expecting her.

"I think not, mademoiselle; but you have not a moment to spare. Follow me."

The superior or abbess of the convent led the way, and Miss Arlington, passionately weeping, followed. "There," said the guide, pointing to one of the dormitories—"there is your friend: she desired to see you alone." An instant afterwards, the long-sundered companions were in each other's arms.

"Valérie, beloved friend and sister, do I arrive but to behold you thus?"

"Thou kind, beautiful Julie!" replied a sweet voice, most musical, though scarcely louder than a whisper, whilst a smile, reflected from the angel-faces bending in love over that holy death-scene, illuminated the pale, wasted features of the speaker—"how could I be found in a more blessed state than in sight of heaven, and encircled in those dear arms?" The smile did not pass away; and Julie, fearing to disturb her by a breath, continued to hold her in her mute embrace. The superior, who had followed with noiseless steps, at length touched her arm: "Your Valérie is in heaven! She waited but to bid you farewell."

Valérie had frequently expressed a wish to be buried

by the side of her unhappy parents, who, thanks to the energetic influence exercised by Duplessis and De Liancourt, had been interred in the consecrated ground of Père La Chaise. This religion of the tomb—felt and acknowledged by all, but chiefly by gentle and loving natures—which seeks to reunite within the circle of the grave the sundered kindred and friends of life, was of course readily complied with. She sleeps beneath a simple marble monument, erected to her memory by her beloved Julie, which bears only her baptismal name, and the expression of a prayer, which, during life, the superior said, was ever on her lips or in her thoughts :—

"AGNUS DEI, QUI TOLLIS PECCATA MUNDI, MISERERE NOBIS."

The tall cross by which the tomb is surmounted flings in the calm evening sunlight its consecrating shadow over the plain slab by its side, and *immortelles* cast by the hand of affection or of reverence upon the daughter's grave fall, not unfrequently, upon the last resting-place of Pierre and Marie Duclos—an emblem and a hope!

Julie Arlington, for many brilliant years a peeress of the realm, and still the life and grace of the distinguished circle in which she moves, has never ceased to think with regretful tenderness, and with a chastened spirit, amid all the glare and grandeur of her position, upon the modest virtues, the grievous trials, and the final recompense of Valérie.

The Romance of Common Life.

No. 2.—THE SAUCY GIPSY.

I HAVE the liveliest recollection of the 3rd of July, 1851; more so, perhaps, than of any other day in the calendar of my life, wherein it is emphatically marked with a distinguishing stone—the colour whereof the reader may guess from the tale I have to tell. It was not at all, I may premise, because the morrow was "Independence Day," that that particular eve of a glorious anniversary dwells so freshly in my memory. So far from that, I am pretty sure—true-blooded American as I am—my mother at least was a Boston girl, and I was born there—that on that morning the old stirring watchwords, "Our heroic forefathers," "The saviour of his country," "Bunker's Hill," and so on, would have jarred disagreeably on my ear, so utterly

out of unison would they have been with the heavenly frame of mind in which I awoke from delightful dreams to paradisiacal consciousness of waking bliss.

As I leaped out of bed, the bright young day, cloudless, beautiful, as my hopes, was thrusting aside the summer night-curtains, and coming forth a jocund bridegroom to embrace his slumbering bride the earth, and with his glowing kisses awaking her to life and loveliness. It will be easily understood, from this shining similitude, what my head was running upon; but the dawn was really a brilliant one, and the picturesque villas and gay gardens of Staten Island, apparelled in its golden light, shone out in their most attractive aspect. Staten Island, the reader may or may not be aware, is a kind of southern suburb of New York, separated from its sister isle Manhattan, whereon the empire city stretches its huge, restless, ever-swelling bulk, along about five miles of sheltered sea—New York Bay—across which you may be ferried for a few cents in a floating steam-palace. My father, Joshua Henderson, master-mariner, and for many years prosperous ship-owner of New York, had, not long before my mother's death, purchased a pleasant dwelling there—Hope Cottage, so named by himself, where he was every day becoming more and more a fixture. The chief and active share in the business of Henderson & Co. had been some time since ceded to his partners; and my father, moreover, was growing, with increasing years and substance, proportionably chary in his shipping

ventures, most of which had latterly been participated by Aunt Martha, his widowed and wealthy sister, located, with her daughter Ruth, at Sherborne Villa, within scarcely more than a stone's-throw of Hope Cottage—and about as sensible and sharp a dame as ever trod in shoe-leather. As for my noble self, I had been intended for a profession—my father inclined to law, my aunt to divinity—but, as it was soon abundantly clear that I should never make a particularly bright figure in either of these, that notion was reluctantly given up. Aunt Martha especially—she was the relict of Silas Garstone, wholesale dealer in dry goods, Broadway, and major in the New York Militia—resented the family disappointment to a most unreasonable degree. I was a failure, she said, and she hated failures: and, as regarded Ruth, I must prove myself worth my salt, which she doubted I ever should do, in some calling or other, before she could bring herself to look upon me as her daughter's future husband; a sentiment, she savagely added, which Ruth fully endorsed. To this un-aunt-like estimate of her only nephew, I, of course, sturdily demurred. I reckoned myself up very differently. I stood five feet eleven in my stockings, enjoyed robust health, and a flow of spirits sufficient, if commercially available, to set up a first-rate liquor store in Broadway, and was, besides, sole heir to at least 2,000 dollars per annum—Hope Cottage and fixings over the bargain. What on earth, therefore, could it signify, in a husbandly sense, that I had not

come off with exactly flying colours at Harvard University, or as yet shown signs of a gift for preaching! When I was at home, Ruth and I had been for years inseparable companions; and it thus came to pass that I unconsciously, as it were, but in perfect accordance, I apprehend, with a law of nature, very early arrived at a decided conclusion that we were especially created for each other, and that to sunder or mate us with uncongenial souls would be an inexpiable crime, alike against humanity and Heaven. Certainly I had always misgivings as to Ruth's entire accordance with those views; and upon reaching home on Sunday forenoon, 2nd July, after bidding final farewell to Harvard, I determined to bring the damsel to the test without delay. For this purpose, I seized the opportunity afforded by the dropping in, soon after dinner, of one of my father's old cronies, to slip quietly off to Sherborne Villa. The reception awaiting me was a gratifying one. My aunt's manner was decidedly less grim and gritty than at my last visit, and Ruth was wonderfully gracious—actually proposed—mamma not objecting—that we should take a long walk together!

To be sure, the afternoon was fine and cool; all the world abroad, and she had not yet sported the new dress sent her from New York—considerations which, I doubted not, had something to do with the flattering proposal. However that might be, the walk was a very pleasant one, and would have been much more so but that Ruth, as usual, laughed off every attempt at

serious discourse. Still, I was in high feather when we returned, and sat down to tea with dear Dame Garstone; soon, however, it proved, to be sweetly combed down. A tall, handsome, military-looking man, forty years old or so, charged into the room, and was received with all the honours. "Mr. Hartmann" —"My nephew, Mark Henderson." The fellow merely glanced at me, in a *de haut en bas* sort of way, but to the ladies he was immensely courteous, especially to Ruth, who received his common-place compliments with evident gratification—but whether only to torment me, I was soon too hot and angry to determine clearly. I stood it pretty well for about half an hour, and then went off with a bounce, and was so little cooled when I entered the parlour of Hope Cottage, a quarter of an hour or so afterwards—I had taken one or two restless turns about the neighbourhood before going in—as to exclaim in a key absurdly loud, except as affording some slight relief to the irritation which was choking me: "Confound that saucy gipsy! Certainly the most distracting riddle of a girl that ever plagued and puzzled susceptible, ingenuous man!"

My father was sitting at an open window, intensely scrutinising through his telescope a large vessel entering the bay from the Narrows. As his deafness had greatly increased upon him of late, I did not suppose, vehemently as I expressed myself, that he could have heard me. I was mistaken: he had caught a portion,

at all events, of my words and meaning; for, immediately turning from the window, and eyeing me with a grimly smiling expression as he seated himself, and in his slow, deliberate way refilled his pipe and grog-glass, he said: "You have seen the saucy gipsy, then?"

"Confound her!—yes," I growled; but, as he did not hear me, I nodded affirmation.

"That's well," he replied, adding in his usual sea-slang dialect: "she's a handsome craft, Mark, no doubt, but a little cranky, I fear, and wants more ballast to bring her down to her proper bearings."

"And a skilful captain, too," I bawled, falling in with his humour.

"That *is* right, lad; and then, I reckon, she'll behave very prettily."

"Doubtful," thought I, as I helped myself to a cigar and a tumbler of rum and water. Whenever thoroughly ryled, I am always thirsty.

"They've bedizened her out with a deal of finery," resumed the ancient mariner.

"That's New York fashion," I shouted at the top of my voice. "She must not be out of the fashion, you know."

"Pray don't scream so, Mark: a stranger would suppose I was as deaf as a post. As to New York fashions, the Boston folk aint much behind in expensive fal-the-rals." Here the dialogue was suspended, I being in no mood for talk, and the governor hardly prepared to translate in words the astounding intelli-

gence which I, much wondering what on earth was coming, saw gradually pierce through and illumine his weather-beaten phiz.

"Mark!" said he at last, when the aurora had reached its fullest intensity—"Mark!"

I did mark, and silently intimated as much.

"I have great news for you, Mark," he went on to say. "You're in wonderful luck, my lad—that's a fact, and so you'll say yourself presently. Your aunt, who is, you know, principally interested, was dead against you all along, and required a mortal deal of persuading. 'Here,' I kept a saying whenever I had a chance—'here's Mark coming home from college with, they say, no gift of tongues whatever, and unfit, consequently, for either law or gospel. The question is, then, how to settle him in the world, and what he's fit for?' I shan't vex you, Mark," continued my father, "by repeating the answer I got, particularly as your aunt veered round all of a sudden—the very day, I mind, that fellow Hartmann or Shartmann came over to Staten Island; and the long and short of it is, that we've agreed you shall be set going in life at once, with an allowance to start with of sixty dollars a month, in—in consideration," added the veteran with exultant glee, "that you consent to take legal charge of the craft you were talking of—— Hollo! I say—what now?"

My arms were clasped in a trice round the astounded ship-owner's neck, arresting further speech by a grasp, which he only got rid of by an exertion of strength

that sent me reeling, till brought up by a sofa, on which I sat down involuntarily.

"Plague take the boy!" growled my father, hitching his discomposed vestments together, and eyeing me with angry surprise—"has he taken leave of his senses?" Confused, dizzy, overwhelmed, I could only gasp out a jumble of excuses, blessings, thanks, which he could not have heard, but seemed nevertheless to comprehend dimly.

"Well, well," he interrupted; "enough said, enough said, Mark. It's a good thing, no doubt, to be set up handsomely in life at your age. Still, there's for and against; and, in fact, it's avent uresome risk for all parties." With that he turned to the window and his telescope, and I rushed into the garden to shout, leap, cry—unheard, unseen. I was but a boy, you know.

The stars were looking forth when, still very nervous and excited, I knocked at my aunt's door. The mulatto help, in reply to my inquiry for her young mistress, pointed to an inner apartment, where, finding Ruth alone, I threw myself at her feet, and poured forth a torrent of wild, wordy rhapsody, to which she hearkened like one in a dream. Presently recovering from the shock and surprise of such a salutation, she forcibly disengaged her dress from my grasp, and angrily exclaimed, "Mark Henderson! you have been drinking; you are positively tipsy, sir!"

"Drinking! yes! joy from golden goblets, which"—

"Absurd!" interrupted Ruth with increasing dis-

pleasure. "Pray have done with such senseless rhodomontade, and tell me quietly, soberly, if you can, what it is my uncle has been saying to you."

I did so, as nearly as I could, in my father's own words. So overflowing was Ruth Garstone's mirthful gaiety of heart, that I saw she had the greatest difficulty as I proceeded to repress a burst of girlish merriment. But my evident sincerity, the fervour of a true affection, which must have been apparent through all the high-flown fustian in which it was expressed, touched the dear girl's better nature—a shade, so to speak, of kindliness and sympathy gathered over her beaming face; and, when I had concluded, she said gently: "I perfectly understand, Mark: we will speak further on the subject to-morrow; you are too excited now; and hark! that is mamma's step. I would not have you see her at this moment for the world. This way, through the garden. My dear Mark," she added, caressingly, seeing that I hesitated, "do come, let me beg of you, and at once."

The reader is now in possession of the why and wherefore of the blissful state of being in which I awoke from soft slumbers on the 3rd of July, 1854; though why I got up so very early, I cannot precisely say. Awfully slow, I remember, the time seemed to pass till eight o'clock struck, the hour at which, I knew, my Aunt Martha and Ruth were expected. When I entered the breakfast-room, my father was there alone, and a little sourish-tempered.

"If sister and her gal don't come soon, I shan't wait," he grumbled. "I suppose they're staying to get breakfast for that stranger they're so sweet upon. And, by the bye, Mark, that free-and-easy-going chap is bound on the same pleasant vy'ge as yourself."

"The deuce! Surely he's not going to marry Aunt Martha!"

"What's that?" said my father, forming his left hand into an ear-trumpet.

I repeated what I had said in a louder key.

"Marry your Aunt Martha! Who was talking about marrying aunts or uncles"——

He was stopped by the entrance of the dame herself. I jumped up all of a tremble, shook hands with her, and then gazed stupidly at the reclosed door.

The good lady looked at me in a queer, quizzical sort of way, as she said, in answer to my blank aspect: "Ruth wouldn't come; she will have it there is some strange mistake."

"What's all that about?" demanded my father, impatient for his coffee.

"I was telling Mark," said his sister, seating herself, and placing her lips close to his ear, "that Ruth wouldn't come."

"Then let Ruth stay away," was the gruff response. "You, and I, and Mark can settle the business we are upon without her, I hope."

"Without Ruth!" I exclaimed, a hot qualm flushing through me. "That would indeed be, as they say,

the play of *Hamlet* with the part of the Prince of Denmark left out."

"Don't talk of plays!" interrupted Aunt Garstone, with a nervous shudder and still fixing me with that odd, quizzical look: "they've crazed the wits of wiser folk than you, my poor boy. Why, what ails the lad?" she continued in a much louder tone. "It can't surely be true, Joshua Henderson, that you've been telling him we've agreed that he's to marry my Ruth?"

Joshua Henderson looked as if apprehensive that his deafness had assumed a new and more disastrous phase —that of totally perverting the sound and sense of words addressed to him, and Aunt Martha iterated her query twice or thrice before he replied to it.

"I tell Mark," he at length said, "that he was to marry thy Ruth! Pooh! I don't believe I mentioned the gal's name!" This was too much.

"What!" I fairly screamed, "you did not assure me, yester-evening, that my aunt, after much persuasion, had agreed that the best thing to be done was for me to marry Ruth at once—take legal charge of her, were your words—and that we were to have an allowance, to start with, of sixty dollars a month, besides a reasonable outfitting: do you mean seriously to deny that?"

"You young varmint!" shouted my father; "if I haven't a mind to"——

"Well, but what, Joshua, *did* you tell him?" inter-

rupted my aunt, springing up and interposing between us. "As Ruth says, a strange mistake has been made by somebody."

"What did I tell him, sister?—why, this: that our new clipper-brig, the *Saucy Gipsy*, loaded with sorted sundries for Constantinople and elsewhere, was to be placed under his legal charge as supercargo, with "——

Enough! more than enough! A sensation akin to sea-sickness came over me; and it was only by a great effort that I retained sufficient strength to leave the room, stagger up stairs, and throw myself, in bitter anguish, upon the bed from which so short a time before I had risen in such elation of mind.

Two or three bitter hours brought healing on their wings, suggesting as they did that, after all, I had no right to rave in that mad way of cruel fate and unpropitious stars! The air-drawn prospect, existing only in my own imagination, had vanished—that was all, leaving me, so far as Ruth was concerned, in the same position as before; whilst Aunt Martha's opinion of my discretion and ability must have greatly improved, since she had consented to invest me with so important a charge as the one proposed. These and similar cogitations were interrupted by a tap at the door, and "Can I come in now, Mark?" sharply demanded by Dame Garstone herself. She was instantly admitted; and I was glad to see that, in place of the mocking, quizzical look, as I interpreted it, her countenance wore an expression of kindliness and

benignity. "I shall not let Ruth know," she began, "how crazily you behaved this morning: she is quite vain enough already. But I may tell you, that it has much inclined me to believe you capable of—that you do, in fact, love your cousin with a sincere and lasting affection."

"Ah, my dear aunt, if I might only express to you how fervently"——

"No, don't, Mark," she hastily interrupted: "I would much rather not. I feel increased confidence, I was about to say, that I shall not have reason to regret placing you in charge of the large venture embarked in the *Saucy Gipsy*—you may well blush and wince at that ridiculous blunder — unless this, her first voyage, should be permanently associated in our minds with calamitous tidings, as I much fear may be the case."

"What the deuce is coming now?" thought I, as my aunt paused, in some embarrassment it seemed.

"I cannot give you," she resumed, "a stronger proof that I already look upon you as my son—pray, sit still—than by placing that confidence in you which I deem it prudent to withhold from my own brother. I have never, indeed, doubted your manliness and courage, Mark, and that conviction first suggested to me that you would not be an unfit person to take care that Karl Hartmann—whom you saw yesterday at my house, and who is to sail with you in the *Saucy Gipsy*—does not play me and others false."

"I am to be a kind of supercargo, then, to Mr. Karl Hartmann, am I?"

"Something, as you say, of that kind. But, that we may thoroughly understand each other, I must begin at the beginning. You are aware, Mark, that your father and I arrived in America from England now about five-and-thirty years ago, he being then in his twenty-sixth, I in my fifteenth year. Joshua had long made up his mind to emigrate, but I should hardly have done so, had my home continued to be what it once was. Our father kept a shop in the small town where we were born, and where our mother died, soon after the birth of her youngest child, myself. Matters went on pretty much as usual till about my ninth year, when our father gradually yielded himself up to dissipated, or, perhaps I should say, desultory, idle habits, delighting especially in theatrical entertainments, so that whenever a troop of players entered the town, we were sure to have two or three of them living at rack and manger with us. The upshot was—but we are none of us our own keepers—that my father married an actress, of no great skill in her profession, I understood, but young, showy, and of course artful—successfully assuming to be the essence of her craft. This is, I know, according to you, mere unreasoning prejudice; but let that pass. From that time my father's house was no longer a home to me, and I soon decided upon accepting the repeated invitation of my uncle Philipps, to

come over to Boston, and take up my abode in his childless home. It was well," continued Aunt Martha in a subdued tone, " that my brother was free to come away at the time he did, for there was fast strengthening a link of love binding me to that unhappy household which a few more years would have rendered indissoluble God, as we all know, sends his rain alike upon the just and the unjust, and his choicest creations are scattered with the same all-embracing bounteousness. One of the loveliest human flowers that ever blossomed upon earth sprang from that else unblest union. Viola, the child was named after some character in a play, and, bitter grief to me, her mother, with my weak father's concurrence, began, from the first hour the pure, intelligent child was capable of receiving instruction, to train and educate her for the stage! I left Sherborne when Viola was in her fifth year, and her subsequent history, so far as it has been made known to me by her letters, of which I have received many, may soon be told. My father died in embarrassed circumstances; Mrs. Henderson returned to the stage; and Viola made her first appearance at one of the inferior London theatres with but partial success. This disappointment greatly soured the mother's temper, never a very lamb-like one, and she led her daughter such a wretched life, that the poor, unguided child threw herself away upon a wild young fellow of the name of Dalzell—Arthur Dalzell."

" Dalzell! a rather fine name that," I interjected, " but an assumed one, perhaps."

"No; he was a young man of good family, who had lost both his parents in his nonage, and, upon reaching the ripe maturity of twenty-one, was cast upon the world to scramble through it as he best could, with a fortune of five or six hundred pounds, and habits of expense requiring five times as much as that yearly. He had, however, the good taste, though himself what is called a gentleman-amateur, to withdraw his wife from the stage. Finding himself, but a few months after marriage, in imminent danger of a gaol, he managed to procure a commission in the English force serving under General Evans in Spain. There he speedily acquired a character for reckless daring; and when General Evans's troops were disbanded, he transferred his services to the French Foreign Legion, employed in Africa. A long interval passed, and then I heard of them from Southern Russia; and that Captain Dalzell was an officer in the army of the Czar."

"Verily, a roving, adventurous gentleman! But did Aunt Viola share his wanderings?"

"She was his inseparable companion. Captain Dalzell's employment in Russia was not, if I rightly understood Viola, entirely of a military character. He had something to do with Government contracts, in which he failed, in consequence, it seemed, of the bad faith of a partner. This I learned from the last letter I ever received from my sister: it was dated from Odessa!"

"I know: the place which the French and Bri-

tishers have lately cannonaded in a considerate, merciful sort of way, as if desirous of hurting the Russians as little as possible."

"That letter," continued my aunt, "informed me that Captain Dalzell had left Russia for ever, and that she and their only surviving child, Marian, were about to follow, whither she did not precisely know, but very probably to America. This, it proved, was their destination; but unhappily, whilst Ruth and I were absent in Boston, Captain Dalzell arrived at New York, made himself known to my husband, who received him most cordially; lent him five hundred dollars, mainly for the alleged purpose of sending for his wife and daughter; which sum the unhappy man appears to have lost at a gaming-house in one night. The next day he set off, as a curt note apprised your uncle, to join the Mexicans, in arms to defend their country against the braggart Yankees!"

"My stars! but such a note as that from a man that had choused him out of five hundred dollars, must have got the major's dander up alarmingly!"

"My husband was, and naturally so, very wroth; but he acted unjustly in his anger, by writing an unkind, reproachful letter to Viola, whose address he found in my writing-desk, indirectly upbraiding her with Captain Dalzell's misdeeds. I knew of all this too late. The excusatory letter I immediately wrote was returned after a long interval, with a postal intimation that Madame Dalzell had left Odessa; and, from her

continued silence, I was fain to conclude that Viola had finished her sad earthly pilgrimage, till a few days since, when this Karl Hartmann came over to Staten Island, bringing a long letter addressed to me from Arthur Dalzell, who, it appears, is dying at San Francisco, and, repentant too late, is anxious to induce his long-abandoned wife, who is still living somewhere in South Russia, to come over to America, that he may see her and his child once more before his eyes close upon a world in which he has played so unworthy a part. Karl Hartmann, his friend, knows, he writes, South Russia well, and with my assistance will be able to discover the present whereabout of Viola, and bring her safely here. She has, it appears, supported herself and Marian for several years past by teaching music, but of late her eyesight had begun to fail her; and thus whilst I, her own sister, have been wrapped in ease, comfort, luxury, the sweet, beauteous child—for, Mark, dear Mark," sobbed my aunt, giving way to the choking grief which for some minutes had rendered her speech almost unintelligible—"I cannot realise her to myself but as I saw her last, God's radiant angel-child—she, I say, has the while been hopelessly struggling with calamity—abandoned, blind! O heavenly Father! thy ways, thy dispensations are indeed inscrutable!"

"This is a strange story, dear aunt," I ventured to remark after a while. "Does Mr. Hartmann require funds of you for his journey?"

"Yes; and large funds too, Mark."

"I thought so. But how comes it that Captain Dalzell does not know his wife's precise address? Merely that she may be heard of somewhere in South Russia—a pleasant country, I guess, to hunt over upon such an errand just now."

"I asked that very question," said my aunt; "and the answer was, that Dalzell had not for a very long time heard from my sister, except indirectly. I, however, positively refused, from the first, to advance the money, except through you, and from time to time as the exigency might arise. This Mr. Hartmann strongly demurred to; but after seeing you yester afternoon—you have rather a raw, boyish look, Mark—he made no further objection to that arrangement."

"Mr. Hartmann may find, when the push comes, that he has mistaken his man, or boy, since boy I am seemingly doomed to remain all my days."

"Ruth says you will prove yourself a match for half-a-dozen German Hartmanns," said Aunt Martha, pitching a very soothing, soft-sawdering note. "And it is certain that in prosecuting the search after your aunt Viola you will incur no danger. The Czar is anxious just now to cultivate friendly relations with this country, and you will be provided with letters from strongly influential parties here to Mr. Brown, the American representative at Constantinople."

"I shall do my best, be assured, dear aunt, to deserve Ruth's flattering opinion, and to accomplish your wishes."

Aunt Martha's quivering lips pressed mine in acceptance of that pledge, and we then went down stairs, where we found my father hob-nobbing with the said Karl Hartmann, unquestionably a man of superior, commanding aspect; and no one could look upon his sun-bronzed, scarred visage—two sword-cuts, not at all disfiguring — and tall, well set-up figure, without instantly recognising a soldier of service.

The brief conversation that ensued turned upon the war, to the theatre whereof we were bound, the stranger displaying not only an intimate knowledge of the countries to which it was likely to extend, but an inveterate, supercilious John Bullism, as surprising in a German as the perfection of his pronunciation.

"You speak English wonderfully well, Mr. Hartmann," I remarked.

"Not at all wonderfully, Mr. Henderson," he replied, "when you remember that I have passed several years in these United States, where, as you know, the genu*ine* accent can alone be acquired."

The sneering tone and emphasis with which this was said, made my blood tingle again; and, cudgelling my brains for a smart retort, I came out with the following brilliant, if not quite novel, home-thrust: "It is certainly very amusing to find Great Britain, with India and half a world besides in her omnivorous grasp, affecting such righteous horror of aggressive war."

Before Hartmann's flashing glance could be interpreted by words, Dame Garstone interposed with—"There is, at all events, a mighty difference in favour of England as against Russia, in one respect: England did not invade India and other countries in simulated vindication of the Gospel of God—solemnly inaugurate the work of the Devil in the name of Christ."

"Just so, madam," said Hartmann, rising to go away. "Cotton would be a more appropriate inscription upon Britain's aggressive banner than the name invoked by the Czar. The *Saucy Gipsy*," he added, with a mockingly merry glance at the indignant supercargo, "will, it is understood, sail, wind and weather permitting, the day after to-morrow, at about noon. I shall not fail to be punctual." Mr. Hartmann then, after a brief private conference with my aunt, left the house; and so did I, a few minutes subsequently, with Aunt Martha.

The wind blew fresh from the south-west; the blue-Peter had been for some time flying at the foretop-mast-head of the *Saucy Gipsy*—the brig, by the bye, *had* been so named after Ruth's household and familiar soubriquet—now moored off the landing-place at Staten Island, and the order was at length given to cast off; whereupon Aunt Martha, who had been urging her counsels and commands over and over again, hastened from the cabin upon deck, bidding Ruth follow.

"Good-bye, Cousin Mark," said Ruth, holding out

her little hand, and speaking with a lightness of tone I was sure was only assumed. "We shall think of the *Saucy Gipsy* oftener, I daresay, than you will."

"Ah, Ruth, if you only felt as I feel"——

"Mercy forbid! Not, at least, as you felt ten minutes ago—fit to murder poor Mr. Hartmann; and all because I was commonly civil to the man."

"Ruth! Ruth!"

"Just as if a girl of my angelic sweetness of disposition *could* look cross or forbidding, if she tried."

"Oh, come, I'll be darned if"——

"Nonsense! Hold your tongue — do! You've nothing more to say to me, I suppose, Mark?" she added, balancing herself upon one foot, and holding the cabin-door in her hand. "Coming, mamma!"

"Nothing—but that I must have a kiss at parting."

"I daresay! For shame, you rude boy! Did you ever! Why, Mark! Here I am, mamma!"

The *Saucy Gipsy* got away in first-rate style: she was evidently a racer; and Joel Brystone, the skipper, was one of the most skilful and experienced seamen of New York. The voyage had at any rate commenced auspiciously. After patrolling the deck in a state of misty excitement, which for two or three hours neutralised emotions of another kind, I was observed by Captain Brystone to catch wildly at the mizen-ratlins,

the region about my lips assuming at the same moment a hue of yellowish-white; whereupon I was forthwith handed below, and laid out in my sleeping-berth. I don't think my sighs and groans ran much upon dear Ruth during the following six or seven days and nights, but her image returned in undiminished lustre and freshness with the restoration of my mental and bodily faculties, and I silently pledged her over and over again in joyous bumpers, after the very first dinner I sat down to at sea. By that time, we had made the Atlas Mountains on the Morocco coast; and, the wind continuing favourable, the *Saucy Gipsy* was soon slipping through the Straits of Gibraltar, towards the Mediterranean, where we at once became intermingled with the tide of war sweeping eastward to drive back the legions of the Czar. Specimens of the whole art and range of ship-craft—from the swift, stupendous screw line-of-battle-ship to the slight and sluggish sailing transport—passed or was passed by the *Saucy Gipsy* during the remainder of the voyage, all full of red and blue soldiers, or freighted with the dumb and equally indispensable instruments of mortal conflict, the red cross and tri-colour floating proudly from the mast-heads; the national airs of France and England resounding from the crowded decks of the coalesced armadas.

"What think you, Mr. Hartmann," said I, early one morning, as we were both intently watching the huge *Himalaya* sweep past with the Scots Greys on board,

their band playing *Partant pour la Syrie*, in complimentary recognition of *God save the Queen*, indifferently performed by the amateur musicians of a French mail-boat from Malta—"what think you of the stability of this, but a few years since impossible, alliance of the two great Western nations? According to some of the more solemn and second-sighted of the quidnuncs on our side the Atlantic, it amounts to a redistribution of the forces of Europe, not only subversive of the balance of power in the Old, but full of menace to the peace of the New World."

"It is an alliance," replied Hartmann, "dictated by the awakened common sense and the permanent interests of the two nations, and depending for permanence, therefore, neither upon princes nor parchments. As to its menacing America, that is all bosh! unless, indeed, the United States should be conceit-crazed enough to challenge civilised Europe to mortal combat in defence of sacred slavery; as the Muscovite has in vindication of red-handed violence and the precepts of Christianity: then, indeed—— But I eschew prophecy."

"As to conceit," chimed in Captain Brystone, who was standing close by, "I'll back the Britishers against all creation for that; and yet, with all their prancing and trumpeting about this war, they are setting about it, according to their own newspapers, like a parcel of old women, rather than men of sense and pluck."

"There is a tinge of truth in that," said Hartmann;

"but as, no doubt, your sagacity will have already suggested, military departmental deficiencies—the cankers of a long peace—will find a sharp and sure remedy in the experience of actual war."

"That 'long-peace' excuse," persisted Brystone, "won't do at any price; or how is it we never hear of such bungling mismanagement in the French and Russian services?"

"Because, my dear sir, they hold by the Napoleonic maxim—*qu'il faut laver son linge sale chez soi;* a rule there is much to be said in favour of. Still, I prefer, on the whole, unfettered, independent criticism, frequently savage and unjust as it may be towards individuals. Sir John Moore is a notable instance in point—the most furiously abused, and one of the ablest generals England ever sent forth. But it is time to see about breakfast, I think."

"That's a feller, now," remarked the captain, as Hartmann disappeared below, "that would take some time to correctly post up. I agree with you, however, Master Henderson, that he is a Britisher, hail from wherever he may."

We were becalmed for nearly a week in the Mediterranean, save for a brief land-puff now and then; and, the days being intensely hot, Hartmann and I, the only idlers on board, used to take our deck-exercise after sunset, he often reading scenes of plays or snatches of poetry aloud, the brilliance of the night enabling him to read the smallest print with ease. Suddenly breaking

in one evening upon his favourite pastime, I said: "What sort of a man is the Arthur Dalzell said to be dying at San Francisco?"

"What sort of a man is the Arthur Dalzell said to be dying at San Francisco," quietly replied Hartmann, folding down the page he had been reading, and closing the book: "well, in person, well-looking enough, and about my own height and age; in character and disposition, a mingled yarn of good and evil—the evil, as I think, greatly predominating."

"Come, that's candid, at all events."

"You must think so, believing as you do that *I* am Arthur Dalzell."

"Ha! How did you infer that?"

The man smiled, and, taking me in a patronising way by the arm, said: "My young friend—for a friend I am determined to make of you—that ingenuous face of yours can be read by duller eyes than those of Ruth Garstone. Nay, don't be foolish! You naturally wish to know something of your Aunt Viola's husband—Arthur Dalzell. Here, then, in a few rough strokes, is the man's moral picture in little:—Dalzell is a soldier, daring by temperament, a generous fellow too, from the same prompting. He is not thought to be a hard or cruel man—certainly, he would not strike a woman or a child; yet he has abandoned his wife and daughter for years, in order that he might be more free to follow the adventurous, vagabond life he loves. Altogether he is a man of ardent impulses, not without

some pleasant, perhaps good qualities, but utterly destitute of governing principle. Nay, I verily believe," continued Hartmann with strange vehemence, "that although he does love, always has loved his wife—and monster, indeed, must he be, did he not love that gentle, long-suffering woman—yet, I say, I verily believe that there mingles with his fervent longing for reconciliation a base hope, that, in the event of his at least *possible* recovery, he may revel once more in riches by participation in the large sum which, by the death-bed remorse of the man by whom her husband was ruined in the matter of some government contracts, has lately devolved to Mrs. Dalzell."

"Did you inform Mrs. Garstone of the legacy you speak of?"

"Yes, but she seemed not to heed the information, although the bequest is comparatively a large one: silver rubles amounting to nearly five thousand pounds of your money."

"And you are not sure that the vicious maniac you describe is really dying after all!"

"Well, yes, I think he is. We all are, for that matter; but with Arthur Dalzell, I cannot doubt that the wine of life draws near the lees. I agree with you also, that he must be at least partially insane."

We were silent for some minutes, and then I said quickly: "Am I right in supposing that you are personally known to my aunt, Mrs. Dalzell?"

"I know Mrs. Dalzell well; and she knows me,

much too well: I mean, that her esteem can hardly equal her knowledge of me. Of less consequence, you are aware, inasmuch as any business I may have with her can be transacted by proxy—you being that proxy. And if, by chance, I should find myself in her presence, she, unhappy lady, will not, of course, be cognisant of that fact."

Our conversation, after this, turned upon indifferent matters, and it was not long before we retired below, and turned in for the night. Nothing of importance occurred till the *Saucy Gipsy* was safely moored in the Golden Horn—not much then. The cargo was speedily disposed of; all matters of business satisfactorily adjusted; and I was ready to address myself seriously to the fulfilment of my good Aunt Martha's chief behest. But no step could, of course, be taken in the absence of Karl Hartmann, who had disappeared the very day we arrived at Constantinople, after making a bold draw upon the funds in my possession, and promising to return in ten days at the very latest. That time expired, and still no Mr. Hartmann was to be seen or heard of; and I was becoming ferociously impatient, when a letter was placed in my hands by a clerk in a Greek house. It informed me that—but as the letter is before me, and sufficiently concise, I had better simply copy it:

"YALTA, CRIMEA, *August* 18, 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR—This note will reach you by a sure hand, and will, I trust, decide you upon coming here

without delay. I have obtained exact intelligence of (here there is a blotted erasure) your aunt Dalzell, and her daughter, still, as ever, the chosen companion of calamity—Viola, I mean, not Marian—completely blind, I am told; total eclipse—from cataract, it is said. My position here is a peculiar, and rather menacing one, though, after Ingraham's exploit at Smyrna, I should think my certificate of American naturalisation would pull me through. Perhaps not. There are grave circumstances, which I will explain when I see you. By the bye, Prince Menschikoff, who commands here, is making tremendous preparations for the prompt carrying out of his proclaimed intention to drive the red and blue devils now at Varna into the sea, should they dare pollute the sacred soil of Russia with their profane footsteps, or hoofsteps; an announcement which, being indorsed by a unanimous and orthodox clergy, is received with undoubting faith by all here; even by the poor Tatars, who, like the devils—not the aforesaid red and blue ones—believe and tremble. There is one infidel exception—your obedient servant,

"KARL HARTMANN.

"*N.B.*—The roadstead here is a safe one at this time of the year, and I think the *Saucy Gipsy* might pick up a profitable cargo of morocco leathers and lambskins just now."

I determined to start at once; and, first giving the necessary directions to Captain Brystone, I hurried off

to Pera with my letters of especial introduction to Mr. Brown. I found our excellent representative at home, and sufficiently at leisure to listen to a brief exposition of my purpose in visiting the Heracleian Chersonesus.

"A simple affair enough in itself," he remarked; "but you should, I think, keep a wary eye upon Master Hartmann's movements. A note I will give you to Prince Menschikoff, with whom, when here, I had something more than an official acquaintance, will enable you to do so effectually."

I thanked Mr. Brown for his kindness, received the all-important note, and sailed the next day for Yalta with a light heart and a spanking breeze.

By this time the steam and sailing vessels required for the transportation of the British and French troops were assembled before Varna—a motley, multitudinous fleet, numbering from 400 to 500 vessels. We passed them on the 4th of September, at about three leagues to windward; for, luckily for that crowded mass of shipping, the wind, half a gale, was blowing *off* the shore. The embarkation was, we saw, vigorously progressing to the sound of martial music, exuberant cheering, and not unfrequent cannon-fire—in enforcement, no doubt, of the orders signalled by the fluttering bunting of a screw two-decker, bearing a rear-admiral's flag. By sun-down we had dropped the whole of the vast armament, with the exception of the top spars of the largest men-of-war: these presently disappeared in the gathering gloom, and not a sail was visible in any

other quarter save those imaginary ones which landsmen such as I conjure up in the distance out of flashing foam-horses chasing each other over a wild waste of sea.

"Steam," I remarked to Captain Brystone, as he shut up his glass after a long scrutinising look towards every point of the compass—"steam has, I daresay, greatly increased the facilities for such an enterprise; still, it is quite clear, even to my unskilled judgment, that the gigantic embarkation going on yonder is a terribly hazardous affair."

"That's a fact, Master Henderson," rejoined the captain; "and the boldest Britisher there would think twice of such a venture if the Russian men-of-war, instead of skulking off to hide themselves at Sebastopol, showed they meant to have a downright shindy with their enemies at sea."

"You cannot suppose the Muscovites would have a chance with the British fleet in a sea-fight, not to reckon the French!"

"Not the ghost of a chance, in a regular sea-fight, I am quite sure; but that's not what I'm speaking of. I have seen service with a convoy before now; and I tell you, Master Henderson, that, let the men-of-war look them up as smartly as they may, that thundering fleet of transports won't have been at sea six hours before they are a straggling, higgledy-piggledy line, leagues in length and width. Ten or a dozen swift steam-frigates, or half that number of such frisky

fellows as the two-decker we saw cutting about yonder, well placed and smartly handled, would find opportunities of dashing in amongst them, scatter death and destruction on all sides, create the wildest confusion, and be off again, especially at night, before the war-ships could interfere to any effectual purpose. Just fancy the heavy metal of a frigate or a two-decker crashing through the brown-paper sides of merchant-vessels choke-full of soldiers—transports running into one another to get out of the way—and ask yourself what sort of a plight the army would be in to effect a landing in an enemy's country, after two or three turns at such a game as that!"

Having thus delivered himself, Joel Brystone turned to the mate, and ordered him to call the hands to shorten sail, and make all snug for the night, as a "sneezer" was evidently coming on. He himself took the wheel. I dived below out of the way, and was soon, spite of creaking timbers and a roaring sea, in a sound sleep, and dreaming of ——

"Precisely." And that capital guess of yours suggests to me that Ruth Garstone's pretty face was not more changeful in its aspect of smiles and frowns, candour and coquettishness, than is the equally capricious Euxine in passing from wildest fury to gentlest calm. The morning showed no trace of the previous night's gale, save in the slowly subsiding wave-swell, through which the *Saucy Gipsy*, feebly sustained by a light, fitful breeze, helplessly pitched

and rolled. The wind freshened about noon, continued fair; and early the next morning the low flat shore of Kalamita Bay, on the south-west coast of the Crimea, close by the northern horn of which nestles the old Tatar town of Koslov, now Eupatoria, was visible from the deck. It was still far away, however, on our larboard beam, stretching southward in sinuous outline to Cape Cherson, and backed up by the hill-region of the peninsula, which, rising precipitately on the south, reaches inland as far as Simferopol, whence a vast steppe or plain extends in unbroken sterility to Perekop. As the day advanced, Eupatoria and the villages along the coast lit up into clearer distinctness; the hill-tops to the south and east sparkled with sun-fire; and by-and-by we could discern, through the glass, numbers of country-people busy getting in the harvest, with the help of camels and bullock-carts. Everything betokened peace, quiet, security, utter ignorance, or utter carelessness, of the storm of war about to burst upon them. Not a soldier was to be seen, unless some fellows riding about upon ponies, with what to us looked like slender rods, borne in an upright position, or across their saddles, were lance-armed Cossacks. This strange apathy or disdain called forth numerous, and far from complimentary, comments from Joel Brystone, especially after we opened up Sebastopol, and he had counted from the mast-head the numerous fleet skulking idly there. "A tremendous strong fortress though, this Sebastopol!" he

added, "as that fellow Hartmann said, and about the only sensible thing he did say: not a place to be taken by the collar even by the Western Colossians."

"Western Colossi, was it not?"

"Colossi or Colossians," rejoined the captain, "it comes to pretty much the same thing, I believe—which is, that the British and Frenchers will find Sebastopol a cussed hard nut to crack." So saying, and feeling, I could see, a little pouty at having the correctness of his language questioned, the commander of the *Saucy Gipsy* walked away.

The following day, the *Saucy Gipsy* dropped her anchor in Yalta roadstead; and, after the brig had been boarded and ransacked by an inferior crew of officials, we were visited by a sort of amphibious officer, inasmuch as, although a seaman by profession, as he told us, he wore a soldier's uniform, and called himself Major Kriloff. A civil sort of person the major proved to be, after satisfying himself of the genuineness of our nationality, and the legitimacy of our purpose in visiting the Czar's dominions. That civility grew instantly to graciousness when he was shown the letter to Prince Menschikoff, with the wax impressed by Mr. Brown's official signet. There would, he said, be some difficulty in obtaining an interview with his Excellency, who was just then incessantly occupied in marshalling the Imperial forces for the signal chastisement of the sacrilegious allies of the Turk; but every consideration, consistent with the military and police regula-

tions, would meanwhile be shown to a gentleman officially commended to the prince by the representative of a great, friendly power. "The delay will not be very long," added the major; "for his Excellency will quickly finish with the audacious invaders, should they, which I think doubtful, be mad enough to set foot upon Russian territory."

Captain Brystone, who understood French very well, though he did not speak it, gave a sarcastic sniff at hearing this; and I assured the major there was little doubt that the Allies really meant landing in the Crimea, and shortly too."

"So much the better," he briskly replied: "they come to their graves!—though not in one sense, for we shall toss them like dead dogs into the sea," added the gallant officer, tossing down a bumper of champagne emblematically at the same time. "The French," continued the major, kindling with the subject, "the heroic children of the Czar chased before them like sheep in 1812: and a very intelligent countryman of yours assures me, that the English soldiers will be panic-stricken at the mere sight of our invincible veterans!"

"A countryman of ours?"

"Yes; that is, a naturalised American, though a German by descent—a most intelligent person, I assure you. He has given me a lively description of your famous battle of New Orleans, where he tells me General Jackson, with only about fourteen hundred

American militia, put to rout a whole host—upwards of twenty thousand English regulars—though posted behind walls of cotton-bags! He himself was a very young drummer-boy at the time, and helped to beat the advance at the decisive bayonet-charge. His name is Karl Hartmann. Perhaps you know him."

"Well!" exclaimed Brystone, as soon as he could fetch breath—mine was quite gone—and bringing his fist down upon the table with tremendous force—"well! if that don't bang Barnum, I'll be ——."

The major, not understanding English, evidently mistook the captain's words and action for a vehement confirmation of Karl Hartmann's bulletin of the battle, for he immediately said: "I am happy to find you can corroborate my friend's statement. One of the most agreeable, gentlemanlike men I have ever met with is Karl Hartmann, and an ardent admirer of Russia and her glorious Emperor. He has been confined to his hotel by a slight indisposition for the last five or six days, or I should have endeavoured to bring him with me; but as you, Mr. Henderson, are going on shore with me, I shall have much pleasure in presenting you to each other."

"Thank you, Major Kriloff, but Mr. Hartmann and I are old acquaintances. I shall be very glad to see him, let me add."

The major was delighted to hear that, and soon afterwards we landed in company on Yalta pier. Yalta is, or was, a favourite resort of the Russian families

who during the summer visit the Crimea; and, previous to the entry of the allied fleets into the Black Sea, a steamer plied regularly twice a week between it and Odessa, touching at Sebastopol on its way. The town is partly built upon the plateau and western side of a rather lofty promontory, and runs considerably inland through a charming valley sheltered on each side by wooded heights. Many of the houses are built up the hill-side in a kind of step-terrace fashion, the flat roofs of a lower tier forming a promenade to the tier above. The permanent inhabitants are, I believe, chiefly Russians and Greeks, though the Tatar element of the Crimean population—chiefly agriculturists, sullen, swarthy fellows, with high cheek-bones, flat, spreading noses, and narrow, long, cunning eyes—were numerous enough about the streets; and now and then a woman of that race shuffled past, her features concealed by white cotton bandages. The main street was full of soldiers, drawn up in heavy marching order; and of course Major Kriloff was inexhaustibly voluble in his admiration of their fine soldierly appearance—an estimate which, though I did not endorse, I took care not to contradict; and the patriotic monologue terminated only at the door of the principal hotel, where temporarily resided Mr. Karl Hartmann, and where the courteous major left me, after readily promising to return and dine with me and "*ce cher Hartmann*," whose appetite, it appeared, was not in the slightest

degree affected by the ailment which confined him within doors.

Karl Hartmann's indisposition, as I suspected, was a mere pretence, except in so far that an unexpected incident had in some slight degree shaken his steel-strung nerves.

"The truth is, my dear Mark," said he, with an effort at familiar frankness, as soon as we had shaken hands—"for in future there must be no concealments between you and me—that I chanced to meet a fellow the other evening who I thought was a thousand miles away. Had he recognised me as I did him, and my revolver had not put in effectual bail for its owner, as I daresay it might have done, I should have been strung up in a trice to the nearest tree, or, had he chanced to be in a very gracious mood, have been despatched to the other world with military honours—*videlicet*, a close volley and a dozen bullets through my head."

"Nonsense! This must be a reckless, extravagant jest, like your drummer-boy doings at the battle of New Orleans."

He laughed out, the light, merry laugh of a light-hearted, merry boy. "Kriloff has told you of that already, has he? Well, he is one in authority here: it was desirable to win his favour, and I have succeeded in doing so to admiration, by simply humouring his prejudices. But as to the *rencontre* I was speaking of, and its possible consequences, all that is true as doom."

"What crime, then, have you committed, or been charged with?"

"None whatever! I mean no moral crime—one against the military code only. It thus fell out. You are aware that I once held the Czar's commission?"

"No; but I have heard that Dalzell did."

"I served in the same regiment with Dalzell, and he and I were not only bosom-friends and brother-officers, but, in conjunction with one Basil Ypslanti, a wealthy Greek, brother-contractors. We were stationed in Bessarabia at the time, and, both knowing something of military engineering, we, after much ado, obtained a contract for some extensive works connected with the defences of Ismail. The affair wound up disastrously, Ypslanti, whose name did not appear in the business, having cheated us outrageously in the purchase of material. This we were as certain of as that we had life and breath, but legal proof thereof was difficult; and one of the consequences was, that General Korkasoff, meeting me one day about a mile outside of Ismail, called me, after asking a few questions, '*un sacré escroc.*' He was on horseback, and accompanied by an officer of his staff—the man I met the other evening. I also was on horseback. Now, in my mildest mood I could hardly have tamely borne being called a cheat; but at that moment my brain was in a whirl of fiery excitement from wine and loss by play; and the offensive epithet had scarcely left the general's

lips, when I answered it by a fierce stroke across his face with a stout riding-whip, followed by a shower of blows, which, aided by astonishment at the incredible audacity of such an attack, deprived him of all power of resistance. The aide-de-camp was at first equally stupified and paralysed, but, presently rallying his startled senses, he drew his sword, and rode at me, shouting, as he did so, to an infantry picket not far off. I parried his thrust, and returned it by a blow on his head that must have set it ringing for some time, and to divers tunes; then set spurs to my horse, and, being capitally mounted, went off like the wind. I escaped, and found my way to America, where I read in the *Invalide Russe* that, as usual with deserters, I had been tried in my absence by court-martial, and condemned to death, '*mort infamante*,' which in the vulgate is *sus. per col.* You think, no doubt," he added, "that I must be crazy to come here under such circumstances, and perhaps it was an act of madness; but something, I thought, might be trusted to the fact, that the corps to which I belonged is now stationed in Poland; to the change produced in my appearance by difference of years, dress, the absence of beard, moustaches, and so on. Besides, the inveterate gamester ever delights in *le grand jeu*, though his stake be his own life."

"Yes, I can understand that, when the possible gain is in some degree commensurate with the possible loss; but in the present case, you hazard your life for positively nothing—as regards yourself."

"May be so; but the cards are dealt, and the game must be played out. And now to other and more pressing topics. Gabriel Derjarvin, half-Tatar, half-Russ—Ypslanti's executor and trustee—is, I find, a much greater rascal than I had supposed, and I allowed a wide margin too. He will give us plenty of trouble, if nothing worse. He is now, I believe, at Simferopol; and there or elsewhere we must seek, find, and try conclusions with him. Your aunt, Mrs. Dalzell, and her daughter, are lately gone, he tells me, and by his advice, to reside for a time in Sebastopol."

"Sebastopol! To a place about to be besieged—perhaps stormed!"

"An entirely absurd supposition, my good young man," replied Hartmann, with an explosion of bitter mirth. "A grand council of war has been held, at which the programme of the coming campaign has been definitively settled. It runs thus:—The Allies are to be permitted to leave the safe security of their ships, to find their presumptuous march arrested before one of the formidable positions in the vicinage of Sebastopol, whence hurled back, discomfited, overthrown, amazed, by the Russian hosts, all those who escape the sword will be drowned in the sea; a modern illustration, according to a printed address, signed by the archimandrite of Odessa, of the catastrophe which in ancient times overtook swine possessed of devils. Of course, the unsavoury similitude offends your British olfactories—well, on the father's side at any rate, if not

on the mother's—but it is not the less certain for all that—that—dinner is served, and Major Kriloff impatient to fall to. Come along, Master Henderson."

In the forenoon of the following day, Karl Hartmann, Major Kriloff, and I, set out for Simferopol, Menschikoff's head-quarters, in a *tarantas*—a two-horse vehicle, consisting of a coupé and a box-seat. I was not quite sure whether the major looked upon us as companions or captives—possibly as both; but it was very plain that he did not intend to lose sight of *me* till the genuineness of the letter to the Prince had been verified. He was exceedingly gracious, however; and travelling in the Crimea under his authoritative guidance was much more expeditious and agreeable than it might have been had we journeyed alone. And a delightful drive it was, through one of the most placidly picturesque regions it is possible to imagine: fertile valleys, shut in with finely wooded heights; one—that of Baidar, some ten miles long by five in width—cultivated like a garden, and waving with luxuriant crops of wheat, rye, millet, tobacco, interspersed with plantations of vine, mulberry, quince, pomegranate, apple trees: mountain table-lands, or plateaux, called *yailas* by the Tatars, rich in summer-pasture, and covered with long-tailed sheep, buffaloes, camels, and horses. The numerous Tatar huts of lime-washed clay, are, for the most part, built amidst patches of mulberry, walnut, or other fruit-trees. At that season of the year, green tobacco-leaf was hanging

to dry upon rough trellis-work in front of most of them. Upon several of the flat roofs, Tatar girls were winnowing corn; and other industries—turning, for example, with a bow and string—are pursued after a like primitive fashion. The day was splendid, and the sunlit panorama of valley, mountain, forest, river, was further enlivened by the glittering arms and accoutrements of numerous bodies of military, horse and horse-artillery chiefly, galloping past on the direct road, or glancing across a distant opening in the forest —all hurrying westward, to share in the coming triumph of the Russian arms. At Baghtsche-serai, the ancient residence of the Tatar khans, where we slept, or rather should have slept, if permitted by the swarms of fleas, cockroaches, with a sprinkling of scorpions, domiciled hereditarily in the bed-rooms, the same excitement and exultation appeared to pervade the soldiery temporarily halting there; whilst the scowling looks of the Tatar habitants seemed to express a savage hope, controlled by equally savage, servile fear. Major Kriloff introduced us to a party of Russian officers, who were all, and quite naturally, brimming over with indignation at the threatened insult to the sacred soil of Russia. Their eager talk and questioning referred not so much to the French, who, in connection with the campaign of 1812, they affected to hold very cheap, as to the English, with whom they had not yet measured swords; and certainly Hartmann fooled them upon the subject to the

top of their bent. His precious battle of New Orleans, which always stirred my bile, by the ridiculous version it gave of a really creditable affair, absurdly overpuffed as it may have been by old Hickory's partisan admirers, was repeated over and over again, with never-ending variations; and by midnight, when the reckoning for champagne—towards which they would not hear of our contributing a cent—must have reached a handsome figure, it was firmly impressed upon every confused brain there that the English of these days, though still formidable at sea, were as inept as Chinese at land-fighting, and would certainly scamper off at the first flash of the Russian bayonets. Hartmann was in his glory, and concluded the evening's entertainment as follows:—

"I think you hinted just now," said he, confidentially addressing the only Russian officer remaining in the room—and who, it had struck me, was very young-looking for his rank—"I think you hinted a short time ago that, your uncle being a general of division, you could have your gallant Arofsky regiment placed in whatever part of the field seemed likely to yield the thickest crop of laurels?"

"I have little doubt I could."

"In which case," continued Hartmann, "I can give you useful counsel: no thanks, my dear Colonel Softenuff, I"——

"Puhmpenuff"—this is no word-play of mine; Puhmpenuff is a well-known Russian surname—"Puhmpenuff, if you please, Monsieur Hartmann."

"Ah, *oui*, Puhmpenuff — a highly distinguished name, it struck me at first."

"One of the *most* distinguished names in the empire," said Puhmpenuff, stroking his moustache complacently.

"And very deservedly so, I have no doubt," rejoined Hartmann; "but, returning to the counsel or advice I have to give you. It must, to begin with, be clear to you that my opinion of the qualities and composition of an English army is entitled to respect; I, who, when a mere boy, assisted—so far as vigorously beating the *pas de charge* can be called assisting — a mere handful, comparatively speaking, of my countrymen to rout and pepper twenty thousand English red-coats, intrenched though they were behind ramparts of cotton-bales."

"Thirty thousand, you said just now," remarked the colonel.

"Did I? Well, I daresay there might have been thirty thousand; but the truth is, they ran so fast that it was difficult to ascertain their numbers with more than approximate accuracy. To proceed, however. Although nineteen out of twenty of the British soldiers you will soon be in face of have never in their lives heard a gun fired in anger, and won't stop when they do to hear a second, there are, you must bear in mind, two or three regiments which, as a matter of prudence, should be avoided. Not—understand me, Colonel Puhmpenuff — that I for a moment believe a soldier of your heroic name and chivalrous character

cares one straw how brave or how numerous may be the enemies opposed to him: but it is your duty to economise the blood of your valiant Arofskys, prodigal as you may be of your own."

"*Certainement.* There I agree with you entirely, Monsieur Hartmann."

"The regiments I allude to are those that have seen service in India"——

"India!" interrupted the colonel—"I know—we shall go there some day."

"To be sure you will, and back again!" exclaimed Hartmann with a burst which I saw rather startled the colonel, wine-wildered as he was. "You and your Arofskys are just the fellows to do that; and here"—tossing off a glass of champagne—"here's wishing with all my heart and soul that I may live to be there, and give them a hearty welcome when they do go. But I shall never finish if you interrupt me so. The question remains, how to discover which are those India regiments, and I confess I hardly know how that is to be done. There is, however, one plain course to pursue, which will answer the purpose of that knowledge. You must pit the Arofskys against the show-soldiers who never go abroad, and have no more fight in them than hares. They are brigaded together, I see by the papers, and you cannot fail to recognise them. Half of them, and the tallest fellows—six feet of bad stuff every one of them—all wear bear-skin caps; the others wear petticoats."

"Petticoats! *Allons donc!*"

"But I say they do; and not so much as a pair of drawers beneath! There is hardly a pin's difference between the bear-skin caps and them, but I should recommend the petticoats for choice. Good-night, Colonel Puhmpenuff. Should you not," added Hartmann, "be able yourself to profit by the hint I have given you, impart it to such of your friends as may be able to do so, with my compliments, and if they don't ever afterwards remember me in their prayers, they are not the men I take them for—— Ha! Major Kriloff! you here!"

I was even more startled than Hartmann at suddenly confronting that officer, as we rose from our chairs. He had, I was sure, been silently standing there some time; had heard, and, his lowering visage convinced me, appreciated Hartmann's mocking persiflage. He betrayed neither anger nor suspicion by words—contenting himself with telling a lie instead: "I have this moment stepped in to remind you both that we start at dawn of day. Good-night again, messieurs."

"Well, Mr. Hartmann," said I, as soon as we were alone, "that reckless, gibing tongue of yours cannot be governed, it seems, even by the menace of a halter or a levelled row of muskets! For the future, you may be sure that Major Kriloff will not only be our gaoler, but an indefatigable spy over all our motions."

"Possibly; but don't be angry. I would not, and

luckily I cannot, compromise you; and I am, as you say, reckless—mad! or nearly so. In fact, Mark Henderson," he went on to say, "I have a strong presentiment that, do what I may, I *must* lose the game—the game of life—I am playing here. Well thought of!" he added, taking a small sealed packet of papers from his breast-pocket. "You had better at once take charge of these papers. They will inform you of everything it is necessary you should know relative to your Aunt Viola and myself; the understanding being, remember, that you do not break the seal of the envelope whilst I am alive and at liberty. And now let us try to sleep."

We reached Simferopol (formerly Akmedshid), a mean, straggling town, situated in a valley near the source of the tiny Salghir, early in the afternoon of the following day. The inhabitants we found in a state of panic-terror, ill concealed in the presence of strangers by a show of contemptuous bravado; news having arrived that the Allies had actually landed in great force near Eupatoria. Menschikoff had set out for the scene of expected action a week previously; and, as nothing less than an order from the Prince himself could procure us admittance into Sebastopol, the disappointment was a vexatious, depressing one. Major Kriloff proposed, or, more properly, decided, that we should follow the Prince to the head-quarters of the Russian army, which, he said, would not only procure

the required mandate much earlier than if we awaited his Excellency's return to Simferopol, but enable us to be eye-witnesses of the signal overthrow preparing for the impious abettors of the Crescent against the Cross. It was so settled; and after dinner Hartmann and I strolled, as if with no definite purpose, towards the Tatar division of the town (Ak-Metchet), where, if anywhere, Gabriel Derjarvin was to be found. A filthy, ill-kept, inodorous locality is Ak-Metchet, wherein the Helots of the Crimea seem to burrow rather than dwell. The narrow streets are neither paved nor lighted—the best shop-fronts are wooden shutters opening horizontally; and the principal coffee-house, to which we, with much difficulty, found our way, consisted of one large, low, dingy apartment, divided, by rudely carpentered railings, about three feet high, into compartments floored within, and crammed full of dirty, bearded, loose-robed, loose-slippered, hang-dog-looking fellows, each with a cherry-stick pipe in his mouth, smoking in apathetic sullenness round a low table, upon which stood a brazier containing lighted charcoal, and utensils of various shapes and sizes filled with ink-coloured coffee. As soon as Hartmann could distinctly discern faces through the thick, stifling atmosphere, he beckoned to about the only decent-looking, respectably-attired guest there, who at once rose and followed us into the street.

"This, Monsieur Derjarvin," said Hartmann, stiffly, "is the American gentleman, Mr Mark Henderson,

who, I informed you, was expected here to make inquiries after his aunt, Madame Dalzell, and her daughter."

A constrainedly civil but sinister smile lurked about the man's eyes and lips whilst Hartmann was speaking: not a positively ill-looking countenance, but strongly indicative of the fellow's mixed origin. "Grattez le Russe et vous verrez le Tartare," said Napoleon; and a very slight scratching of the super-varnish would, it was abundantly plain, have made that discovery in the case of Gabriel Derjarvin.

"I should be most happy, sir," said Derjarvin, addressing himself directly to me, "to assist in furthering your pious views, were it in my power to do so; but the truth is, that Madame Dalzell, in order to consult and be near an eminent oculist, is gone with her daughter to reside in Sebastopol, where no stranger can, under present circumstances, be admitted. And they say, too," he added, with thinly masked insolence, "that Sebastopol will be soon besieged, perhaps stormed, in which case God only knows what may happen."

"You mean," said Hartmann in a calm voice, though his face was white, and his frame quivering with scorn, hate, rage—"you mean that Madame Dalzell and her daughter may be killed; in which case Ypslanti's legacy might remain in the hands of the trustee."

"It certainly," replied Derjarvin with a devilish jeer, "would not pass to the dastard husband, who"——

"Hartmann!" I interrupted, with difficulty arresting the uplifted hand, that would in another moment have dashed Derjarvin to the ground; "for Heaven's sake, control yourself! And you, sir," I added in French, "might avoid insulting an absent man, and this gentleman's friend."

"Is truth an insult?" he retorted. "Yes, in this instance, I admit, the bitterest that could be offered! I shall endeavour," he added, "to acquaint Madame Dalzell with the interesting fact, that her nephew, having heard of the happy change in his aunt's fortunes, has arrived in the Crimea with the amiable object of cultivating her acquaintance. And now, au plaisir, messieurs, I happen to have important business to transact within." He then re-entered the café.

"I am glad," said Hartmann, as soon as his choking rage permitted speech—"I am glad you did not tell the scoundrel of your introduction to Prince Menschikoff."

"It was as well, perhaps; but there is something of much more importance. Does Gabriel Derjarvin know who you are?"

"No, I think not; but it may be that he suspects. You, at all events, he cannot harm, nor ultimately baffle. And there are reasons why he would not denounce me, even if he were sure—— He knows, too, if he knows anything, that he plays with his own life who threatens mine—— Major Kriloff!" In turning the corner of a street, we had come full butt upon the major. He was slightly confused, but for a moment only.

"Ah, messieurs," said he, "you are like me, then, out for a quiet stroll; and a curious, tumble-down part of the town it is we have hit upon. I shall soon rejoin you at the hotel."

"Dogged!" I exclaimed, as soon as we were out of hearing, "as I told you we should be. Depend upon it, he will find out whom we have been talking with, and have a chat himself with Derjarvin!"

"Very likely; but I am, as you see, fastened to the stake, and, bear-like, *must* fight the course. The end is in the stars."

We rose before the dawn, and were on the road to the Russian camp before Tchatir-Dagh, the loftiest of the Crimean mountains, displayed his morning sun-crown. The weather continued fine, though, as we neared our destination, the state of the roads showed that rain had recently fallen in that part of the country. The district through which we were passing was a pleasant, diversified one, very similar to that before described, with the addition, that openings in the hills gave now and then to view patches of blue, glittering sea in the distance, shut in again, almost as soon as caught, by the devious road; but, with the exception of the ubiquitous Cossacks, we saw no soldiers whatever: they were all, no doubt, concentrated for the now imminent conflict. About noon on our second day's journey—the reader must understand that we did not travel with the speed of a mail-coach over a macadamised road—we heard the booming of

distant cannon, which the major and I took to be the commencement of that conflict, but which Hartmann pronounced to be merely artillery-practice, not a sustained battle cannonade—two very different things. His opinion we afterwards knew to be a correct one. The firing we heard was that of the Russian guns at the Alma, trying their range over the ground which the Allies must necessarily pass in assailing the Russian position.

We reached that position on the eve of the memorable battle; when Major Kriloff, first giving us in strict charge to a subaltern, peremptorily demanded my letter to Prince Menschikoff, with which he forthwith disappeared through the dense masses of soldiery, in the direction of two or three white tents near the centre of the encampment, and the only ones I saw.

A solemn, fearful, thrilling sight was that which presented itself upon the now historic heights of Alma, and the acclivity beyond that river—a space easily, from the vantage-ground upon which we stood, swept throughout its whole extent by the naked eye—yet within which narrow verge a hundred thousand combatants were already marshalled. Here, the sullen satellites of the Czar; yonder, the eager soldiers of the West, armed with all the modern enginery of war—offerings of science at the shrine of Moloch—and impatient for the signal that would launch them at each others' throats. Who shall foretell the issue of the coming strife—dare predict aught thereof, save

that the now fast-sinking sun, whose receding rays are at this moment but faintly reflected from bayonet-points, glittering epaulettes, and the bright scarlet uniforms of the British array, fronting the Russian right and centre, will to-morrow light thousands of brave fools to dark, untimely graves!

It was thus the raw youth, fresh from his father's home, felt rather than reasoned. The war-accustomed soldier by my side, a stranger to such commonplaces, felt and argued after another fashion; and whilst I was awed, oppressed, by the magnitude, the mightiness of the spectacle, with its bodeful associations, its dire shadows cast before, he was coolly mastering its details, weighing the advantages or otherwise of the rival positions in a purely military sense; and when I turned sharply towards him, startled, shocked in my sentimental mood by the ringing tone in which he spoke, I read in Captain Dalzell's brightly-flushing face and sparkling eyes—I had for some time quite made up my mind as to who Karl Hartmann really was—that the soldiers of the West, those ranks of red especially, my father's countrymen, were not, as I had feared, doomed to inevitable defeat.

"Before this hour to-morrow, Master Henderson," said he, "a great fact, which, indeed, none but fools have ever questioned—but then fools are so large a majority everywhere—namely, the immense physical and moral superiority of the western to the northern and eastern races of Europe in the present day—will

have received a new and brilliant illustration, and a new and brilliant page of military history will also have been inscribed by the victorious swords of France and England. And worthy of those great deeds is the magnificent theatre in which they will be performed—magnificent in a soldier sense as well as in natural grandeur. Let me sketch it in rough outline, so that, when you return to America, you may be able to describe to your aunt and father—and the Saucy Gipsy of course—a position which twenty thousand of our, of their race would have held against a world; but from which, to-morrow, you will see some fifty thousand Russians driven like sheep."

"There is an adage, Mr. Hartmann, relative to slaying the bear before you sell its skin."

"And a very respectable adage it is," rejoined the confident soldier; "but, spite of its ancient wisdom, we will take the liberty, for once, of forestalling the spoil, now that the Lion and the Eagle are so close upon the quarry. But with respect to this position of Menschikoff's: really, it speaks highly for the old fellow's military judgment, particularly as he is only a sea-officer by profession. We are standing on the ridge, and at about the centre, of a vast and rugged amphitheatre, shut in seaward by precipitous cliffs, and on the right by hilly ground, fissured by impassable rifts. This amphitheatre slopes roughly, jumpingly down to a river, which my obliging friend, the officer in whose charge or custody we are left, informs me is

called the Alma. Now, these heights cannot be less than three hundred feet above the level of that river; whilst the surface of the slope is, moreover, you perceive, broken into sharp ridges, rugged ravines scooped out by winter floods. On this side of the river, and in front of the British position, is a scattered village, vine-fields, and other wooded cover, occupied, my friend informs me, by thousands, but say hundreds of riflemen. In addition to these defences, many earthworks have been thrown up, and batteries of heavy cannon so placed as to sweep every practicable way of approach."

"How, then, are the Allies to attack a force so posted with any chance of success?"

"The 'how,' my young friend, presents itself very simply. The French on the right of the Allies, their own right resting on the sea, will, I apprehend, if the cliffs are accessible seaward, endeavour to scale them, under cover of the ships' guns, and turn the Russian left. The British have nothing for it but to fairly take the bull by the horns, ford the river in their front, clear the village and wood, and charge boldly up these broken, hilly, cannon-swept heights. The bayonet will make a road."

Having so far settled the affair to his own satisfaction, Mr. Hartmann turned to "my friend," the Russian sabaltern, with whom he immediately commenced an animated conversation in Russ.

Meanwhile, evening, with its calming, subduing

power, was falling over all things, the vast, restless masses of men around us inclusive; and gradually the deafening Babel of shouts, orders, imprecations, the measured march of armed men, the gallop of horse, the hurrying to and fro, the bugle-calls, the roll of drums, all subsided to comparative silence, and was succeeded by a low, wide-spread hum and murmur of many voices, varied now and then by peals of laughter or rough snatches of song, as the men settled themselves for the night. Presently, innumerable watch-fires glanced brightly forth, and, repeated in the distant French and English bivouacs, seemed to meet and mingle with the lights of the firmament.

"The next time, Mark," curtly observed Hartmann, "the bright stars look down upon this particular spot of earth, their lovers' light will fall upon sounder sleepers than the wearied fellows that will to-night dream around their watch-fires. Really a splendid night though, but deuced chilly! I hope Major Kriloff will soon turn up. Oh, here he comes."

The major apologised for his long absence. It was only after much delay that he could obtain a few moments' interview with the Prince. "Your letter, Mr. Henderson," he added, with double-refined politeness, "is entirely satisfactory; but his Excellency will not be able to see you personally till after to-morrow's battle—I might say, since of that there can be no doubt whatever, to-morrow's victory· and, gentlemen, I have further to say, that Colonel Puhmpenuff sends

his compliments, and will be glad of your company for an hour or two this evening."

"We accept the invitation with the greatest pleasure," promptly replied Hartmann. "Come along, Mark! Depend upon it, my lad," he added, as we followed a few paces behind the major, "that if there is a snug, snoozy bivouac to be had on such a field as this, a rich Puhmpenuff will be sure to have secured it." —Colonel Puhmpenuff, who *was* snugly bivouacked, received us very cordially, and we made a convivial night of it, no one appearing to think of bed. The colonel himself, however, though I suppose as brave as others, seemed ill at ease after a while; and more than once, when he thought himself unobserved, I noticed him rapidly make the sign of the cross, and, judging by the motion of his lips, ejaculate a prayer. Poor fellow! the shadow of a near and premature death chilled and depressed his boding spirit.

With the first rays of the dawn, the *réveille* rang through the Russian host, which immediately started into life and activity. Major Kriloff procured three Cossack horses for himself and us, and a clump of Cossacks proper, to escort or guard us; and, bidding farewell to our hospitable entertainer, we took our way to some high ground, not far from the village of Almatomak, and near the Russian centre, which commanded a view of a large portion of the field. Breakfast over, the troops—green infantry, green artillery, green cannon, green tumbrils, green cavalry, with the exception

of a few squadrons of dragoons clothed in white—took up their assigned positions, and immediately numerous processions of splendidly habited popes or priests, bearing sacred pictures, passed slowly before the lines of kneeling soldiers, blessing them with uplifted, outstretched hands, and no doubt appropriate words, though these were inaudible; a reverential roll of the drums, as if muffled, continuing throughout the ceremony—which over, the pictures and popes were sent to the rear, out of the range of heterodox cannon-balls. There were no colours that I saw, and the officers concealed their rank and honours beneath the gray great-coats of the common soldier—a useless, as well as degrading device, according to Hartmann; an officer, armed with a sword, being always easily distinguishable from the musket-bearing rank-and-file, particularly if he does his duty—that of encouraging and rallying his men.

The oppressive pause which followed the close of the religious ceremonial, was at length broken by the booming of heavy artillery, far away on the Russian left. This proved to be the guns of the fleet supporting the attempt of the French to scale the cliffs on that side, as Hartmann had anticipated. Mounted officers were soon galloping to and fro; large bodies of troops moved off to sustain and strengthen the Russian resistance; and the struggle in that quarter rapidly developed itself. The English, meanwhile, after having some time before closely approached the

Alma, lay motionless upon the ground, partially concealed from view by the inequalities of its surface, their left terminated by a brilliant body of cavalry, though numbering only—Hartmann reckoned—about a thousand sabres. Fiercer with every passing minute grew the din of battle on the left; still the English gave no sign, and this, to me, inexplicable tardiness to engage, sent the hot blood in a gallop through my veins. Hartmann was also greatly agitated: his face as white as paper, his eyes aflame with excitement; and even Kriloff was indulging himself with a jest at the scarlet soldiers' expense, when he was silenced by a shout like an explosion from Hartmann, followed by—"The British bugles at last! Now for the tug of war!"

As the words left his lips, the red-coated battalions rose up out of the earth, as it were—formed, with the Rifles in front, the artillery in the intervals of divisions—and with banners displayed, came on in all the pomp and glory of war. I can merely indicate by a few brief pen-strokes, my own very partial experience of the battle itself. The Rifles had, I judged, reached the river when the hurricane of fire reserved for that moment burst forth, and must, it seemed to me, have swept away every soldier within range; and how, I asked myself, shall men of mortal mould withstand, defy, that continuous, incessant iron tempest? Yet to my amazement did the volleyed thunder of the invisible battle, the war-cloud of driving smoke and glancing

flame, which shrouded the actual combatants—manifestly advance up the cannon and rifle swept heights, in vast whirling eddies, as it were, for a moment driven back, again sweeping onwards, and opening, dividing, lifting into rifts, layers, of flame-smoke. And there gave indistinctly to view, crowds of men struggling together in confused masses, or writhing on the ground —lines of flashing bayonets, of shakos, bear-skin caps, Highland bonnets; while the uproar of shrieks, yells, imprecations, cheers, was maddened, so to speak, by the crashing thunder of an artillery which for a long time seemed to multiply itself with the exigencies of the fearful strife. Thus confused and fragmentary, but vivid, was my individual impression of the battle of the Alma. Yet, fascinated as I was by the dread spectacle, I well remember to have felt, after the first quarter of an hour, an instinctive conviction that the rout of the Russians, in a given time, so many minutes more or less, was the assured, the immutable conclusion of the furious struggle—a conviction which, as the day advanced, was shared by the Russians themselves. This was evident from the exclamations of rage and astonishment I heard on all sides; the galloping of mounted officers here and there, without purpose or result; the hurrying far to the rear of wounded officers rescued from the *mêlée;* and, by-and-by, from the anxious withdrawal, beyond chance of capture, of the numerously-horsed artillery. Whilst I was rooted, as it were, to one spot, Hartmann was moving restlessly about—to

the extent of the tether permitted by a dozen Cossacks, who never left him for an instant—in a state of wild excitement. Twice only during the battle did I hear his voice; once, soon after its commencement, exclaiming: "They have fired the village! Fools! they should have held it with their teeth." And again, just as the hour of final victory and defeat was about to strike: "This way, Mark!" cried he; "only for a moment, or you will miss the grandest act of the play, and about the last too, for on this side in a few minutes it will be, or I am much deceived, *exeunt omnes.*" I mechanically obeyed in time to see, in the direction to which he pointed, on the right of the position, a vast and solid mass of Russian infantry drawn up in reserve in the rear of a battery, cleft, riven asunder by two pieces of heavy artillery brought to bear upon them from a near eminence, at point-blank range; and to hear the tumultuous yell of mortal agony, rising high above the general roar of the battle, till, at the third or fourth discharge, the serried mass, which there was no attempt to deploy into line, broke asunder, and fled in confusion and dismay. On the left, the French battle had been equally successful and decisive, though by no means so obstinate or bloody; and presently a thundering cheer, heralding the swift advance of a line of flashing steel along the whole British front, completed the panic of the Russians, who, giving way in all directions, were in a few minutes, with the exception of their numerous cavalry, who made a show, and a show only,

of interposing between the victors and the vanquished —a mob of terror-stricken fugitives, throwing away muskets, knapsacks, even shuffling off their heavy boots as they ran in their frenzied flight.

"There go the valiant Russ!" exclaimed Hartmann, "as I told you they would, like a flock of frightened sheep; and our friends here are naturally impatient to follow; so come along, Mark, or some of the unrespecting bullets flying about may chance to mistake you for one of the runaways. Hi! hi! hip, hip, hurrah!" shouted the untamable man, as he set spurs to his horse, flourished his cane above his head, and rode off at the head of the wondering but watchful Cossacks.

Kriloff had absquatulated some time before, and we did not see him again till the second day after the battle; by which time, something like order was restored among the Russian troops. He came to say, that Prince Menschikoff was about to move with the bulk of his army in the direction of Simferopol; and that he, the major, Hartmann, and myself, would set out direct for Sebastopol in an hour from that time. He had not left us more than ten minutes, when a subaltern of the Arofsky regiment came to say, that Colonel Puhmpenuff, who was in *extremis*, desired to see us immediately. We found the good-natured, if not very bright, young officer extended on the greensward, his head propped up by knapsacks, and evidently upon the threshold of his last long home. He was dying from a hurt in the hip, received at the

Alma, which, from improper treatment, had gangrened. He had a letter in his hand, which he placed, with a faint smile, in Hartmann's.

"Deliver this," he slowly murmured, "to Admiral Korniloff, my relative, at Sebastopol. He may befriend you: you will have need of friends. Kriloff, though a noble—Heaven pity such nobles!—is an agent of the secret police. He suspects you to be—bend down your ear—— Ha! As I feared, it is true! No matter; I who shall soon need mercy, would fain show some whilst yet I may. Kriloff but suspects, remember. He saw somebody at Simferopol who hinted—who hinted"—— He stopped suddenly; a shadow fell and rested upon his face; a slight shudder thrilled his frame; he faintly ejaculated: "Marie! God!" and died. The letter was directed in a female hand to himself; the envelope was stained with blood; and so was a lock of bright chestnut hair—the colour of Ruth's—which it contained.

On the following afternoon, Hartmann and I, with of course the inevitable major, took up our abode at the Hotel of the Marshals, Sebastopol, in the same line of street as the church of St. Vladimir. Hartmann had luckily obtained—from Derjarvin, I supposed—the address of the surgeon-oculist with whom Mrs. Dalzell was temporarily residing; and within an hour of our arrival I sent her, by the hotel garçon, the letters of which I was the bearer from America; one placed in

my hands at the last moment by Hartmann—"from her husband," he said; and a note, stating that I would myself wait upon her and my cousin Marian in about two hours from that time. This done, Hartmann and I went out for a stroll, closely watched within the place, we were quite sure; but egress from Sebastopol was wholly impossible without a guard at our heels.

Sebastopol is not a city: it is an immense fortress, and nothing else, of which the houses are troop-barracks, fortified with remarkable skill, and at an incredible cost.

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Hartmann," I remarked, "that Sebastopol is not a place to be taken by the collar, even by an Anglo-French army; and yet, judging from the confusion and terror everywhere visible, the Russians themselves seem to despair of a successful defence."

"The confusion is more apparent than real; and if what Kriloff reports is true—that a part of the fleet has been sunk, to block up the entrance to the harbour—a vigorous systematic defence has, you may be sure, been organised."

"You are of opinion, then, that the Allies will break their teeth upon this granite stronghold of the Czar?"

"Very likely. It is one thing to accept battle in the open field, and quite another to hold an enemy at bay from behind stone batteries and covered ramparts.

Worse troops than you and I saw beaten hand over hand the other day ought to hold Sebastopol against any amount of force. The successful defence of such places proves nothing. Napoleon broke his teeth, as you term it, upon Acre; Wellington, upon Burgos: but here we are at the Hotel des Maréchaux again."

"Remember," said Hartmann half an hour subsequently, as I was about to proceed to my Aunt Viola's, "not a word of Karl Hartmann, nor of any *suspicion* you may entertain. Good-bye. I shall be anxious for your return."

Ten minutes had not passed when my cousin Marian was in my arms—weeping, sobbing, lamenting; blessing, thanking Heaven all in a breath. Lamenting for her father's illness; blessing, thankful that her mother and herself would soon be near him—with him once again; it might be to aid in restoring him to life and health—to life and health in free, happy America—that far-off land of blessed promise, which she had so longed, yet dared hardly hope, to behold! And now, to dwell there with dear Aunt Garstone—a name that had ever been to her a holy household word; with Cousin Ruth, whom she knew as well from her letter as if they had been from childhood inseparate sisters! "Too much! too much!" sobbed poor Marian—"a change too mighty, too blissful to be realised!"

It was too much for me, I know, who could say nothing, suggest nothing, do nothing, whilst that torrent of passionate utterance was pouring forth, but

ejaculate unintelligible vocables in choking sympathy. We calmed down at last; got our eyes dry enough to see through them; and, had I needed proof that Hartmann was Arthur Dalzell, it would have been abundantly supplied by Marian's face, which was a refined copy of her father's. Neither could it be doubted that a man so beloved by his wife and child must possess many good, many admirable qualities — dwarfed, hidden, overgrown, as they might be by the poison-plants that spring up so plentifully in the sensuous and ardent natures that lack or spurn the purifying discipline of self-control.

"That is mamma's bell," said Marian; "she is becoming impatient. Be very calm yourself, dear cousin," she whispered, "or you will renew her agitation, which, you may suppose, has been very great."

Marian opened a door very gently: a lady habited in mourning sat near a window, her pale, finely chiselled face, from which a lustre seemed to breathe, though the eyes gave no light, turned expectingly towards us.

"My nephew Mark," she said in Marian's silver accents, but more subdued, and sorrow-toned to the gentlest patience of expression—"My nephew Mark!" I was on my knees before her, clasping her slender hands, gazing up at her mild, seraph face, and marvelling no longer that my aunt Garstone held her still so freshly in remembrance, though divided from each other as they had been by more than thirty years of

wearing and tearing life. I need hardly say that the mother's words of welcome, of present grief, of hopeful anticipation, were essentially the same as her daughter's, though more soberly tinted. She would have set out at once—for were there not oculists as skilful as Dr. Isomine to be found in America?—but that she must perforce wait to see Gabriel Derjarvin, who was not expected in Sebastopol for some days to come. Presently our conversation assumed a more cheerful tone · we talked of Aunt Martha, my father, Ruth—and were building castles in the air by the dozen, when Dr. Isomine came in to say that the *rappel* had beaten—at which signal every one, not on duty, must forthwith betake himself to his home. Of course I immediately took leave.

There was still, spite of the *rappel*, much clangor and confusion in the streets, caused, it seemed, by the numbers of families of condition that were eager to escape, from the supposedly imminent assault by the Allies upon southern Sebastopol, to the comparative safety of the northern side of the great naval arsenal; in furtherance of which natural desire, a bridge of boats had been moored across the main harbour.

I found Captain Dalzell, as I shall now call him, alone; and at his request I related all that had passed in as nearly as I could remember the very words of the speakers. He listened with bowed head, and his face covered with his hands, in profound silence, marked, as much as broken, by a deep stifled groan which twice

or thrice escaped him. He made no remark in answer, and, after waiting awhile, I said :

"It is absolutely necessary, Captain Dalzell"—— There was a movement of surprise, but he controlled himself· "It is absolutely necessary, Captain Dalzell, that immediate action should be taken in this most unhappy business."

"That is true," said he, raising his head and looking me sadly in the face ; "but what action—to what end ?"

"I cannot say, ignorant as I am of the precise circumstances in which you are placed."

"Let me plainly state them then: I *am* Arthur Dalzell, ci-devant captain in the Czar's service, and now under sentence of *mort infamante*, for horse-whipping one of his generals. This, Kriloff knows—knows, not suspects only, as Colonel Puhmpenuff supposed. He and Derjarvin have had a second interview, the result of which was, that the two worthies agreed to keep my secret, upon condition that they be permitted to keep and divide the five thousand pounds bequeathed to my wife."

"Where could you learn all this ?"

"From Major Kriloff's own lips, not half an hour since; uttered plainly, unblushingly, to my very face; but which of course would, if necessary, be as boldly, unblushingly denied. A legal acquittance, signed by Madame Dalzell, placed in his hands, the major was pleased to say in conclusion, and I might leave Sebastopol to-morrow."

"That penalty, then, for your exceeding rashness, Captain Dalzell, must be paid."

"Sir!" exclaimed Dalzell, springing fiercely up, as if about to strike me—"do you mean that, to save this worthless life of mine, I should beggar my wife and enrich Kriloff and his brother-scoundrel?"

"My Aunt Viola would not estimate the money at a feather's value in comparison with your safety."

"Better and better! It is an additional motive, is it, that I should cast a wife—a wife stricken with blindness—penniless upon the world, because she is not only a long-suffering, gentle, but a loving, all-forgiving woman! Nay, nay, Master Henderson, bad as I may be, I am not capable of the infamy you counsel. When I prove so, Derjarvin will *know* me to be the dastard you have heard him call me. And herein," he continued, for I, in fact, knew not what to say—"my will is its own lord; for if it happens that, by any means whatever, Mrs. Dalzell is wrought upon to comply with Kriloff and Derjarvin's terms, I will that moment denounce myself to the authorities, and proclaim the treason to the Czar of the confederate villains. They fear this; and therefore it is that they shrink from working upon my wife's feelings, except through me. This gives me time—perhaps a chance. Then Admiral Korniloff, whom I have called upon—the letter I placed in his hands was written by a niece of his, betrothed to poor Puhmpenuff—says he will gladly render me any service in his power."

"Pray Heaven these frail twigs may not fail you! But, should they, it would be sheer insanity to sacrifice your life to a vain "——

"Be it so!" peremptorily interrupted the wilful man. "We are all, as you have heard me say before, more or less insane. I, like Hamlet, am mad nor'-nor'-west; but when the wind is southerly—— You know the rest. Good-night!"

What to the purpose could be said or done, with so fearless and unreasoning a nature to deal with? I was at my wits' end—no very long journey, the reader may think—and fain to wait with what patience I could muster for the solution which Time would bring—the doleful Time, as it limped slowly past in a beleaguered city, wherein one seemed to breathe an atmosphere of peril, dismay, and death. Derjarvin failing to appear as he had appointed, my aunt and cousin urged immediate departure, the business of the legacy to be left in the hands of a respectable syndic; and I dared not hint at the reasons which forbade compliance with so sensible an arrangement. Next came the bombardment by sea and land, and amongst the victims of that fearful day was Admiral Korniloff, killed by the bursting of a shell. That frail hope gone, I once more essayed to shake Dalzell's resolution. Vainly, as before. My eager reasoning was water dashed against a rock. He was far, he said from the end of his resources yet. What his plan was, if he had one, I knew not. In fact, I rarely saw him,

except in the morning before he went out; but I knew his old vice of gaming had regained its ascendancy, by the frequent drafts he made on my purse; and I could refuse nothing to a dying man, as I firmly believed him to be. It was very likely, I thought, that the insanity of play had suggested the possibility of winning a sum sufficient to purchase the connivance of Kriloff and Derjarvin, without impinging upon his wife's fortune. Poor maniac!

And thus the weary days dragged on, bringing us to Saturday, the 4th November. The failure of the combined attack had inspired the Russians with new courage, which the constant arrival of reinforcements —the tidings that two Grand Dukes were on their way to Sebastopol—the lying bombast, widely placarded in French and Russ, pretendedly descriptive of the ever-memorable charge of the British light cavalry at Balaklava—increased to exultant confidence. On that day, November the 4th, dull and gloomy as the weather was, Sebastopol seemed drunk with pride and anticipated victory. Triumphal music resounded on all sides; the church-bells rang out their merriest peals; the vociferous cheers of the soldiery gave savage chorus; and religion, simulated, unreal, assumed to order, like the other less solemn shams in progress, lent its aid to inflame the intoxication of the hour—processions of popes, as before the Alma, bearing holy pictures, and chanting Israel's psalms of triumph over the heathen, constantly passing and repassing along

the lines of devout and drunken troops, which in countless numbers thronged the streets.

Elbowing my way with difficulty back to the hotel from my aunt's, about nine o'clock in the evening, I found Captain Dalzell impatiently awaiting me. He was greatly excited—not, however, by wine.

"I am come, Mark," he said, "to bid you farewell. I leave Sebastopol in about four hours hence."

"Leave Sebastopol! You have arranged, then, with —with"——

"With Kriloff—yes. You start and blush, and I am glad you do; it is an involuntary justification of what you have termed my insanity. Reassure yourself. Your aunt Viola's husband is not yet fallen so low as to esteem base life above brave death. Kriloff and Co. will call here to-morrow evening to receive the legal acquittance for the legacy, when you will be free to deal with them, for, as I have already said, I quit Sebastopol long before the dawn"

"You speak parables."

"A few words will make my meaning clear. A great blow is about to be attempted against the beleaguering forces—a blow admirably planned, and, if successfully carried out, the star of England's military greatness will suffer grievous eclipse. Its main features may be thus described:—An immense force in infantry and artillery, variously estimated at from fifty to seventy thousand men, will assail the British position above Inkermann before daybreak. Should Men-

schikoff or the two Grand Dukes—I don't know who commands in chief—so far succeed as to extend a victorious hand across to Liprandi at Balaklava, the Crimean campaign will have terminated, and all that remain of the allied forces must re-embark—if they can."

"But surely there is no danger of such a catastrophe?"

"Much danger. The British position on the side of Inkermann is easily assailable, and the odds in numbers will be overwhelming. Should the Russians, under cover of the darkness, succeed in creeping up the slopes and ravines, and with their cannon gain the ridge of the heights unperceived, nothing but a miracle of war can give Raglan the victory. The British will be taken in flank, and it will be a long time before their own divisions on their left can be brought into action: the French will be still later. Still, if they are not surprised, a few thousand only of that astonishing infantry may make a stubborn fight of it till help comes."

"But how—I really don't understand"——

"What this has to do with my leaving Sebastopol? Just this: by the favour of Major Bovinski, a Pole by birth, whom you have heard me often speak of lately, I accompany his regiment as a volunteer, in the van of one of the divisions, attired as a Russian officer; and, favoured, as Menschikoff hopes to be, by the darkness, I shall have at least a chance of joining my country-

men, if not of rendering them a much more precious service."

"I understand. It is a desperate cast, yet one that even I would not attempt to dissuade you from."

"Thank you, my boy. Farewell! You will know what to say to my wife—to Marian. If I escape, well; if not, they will be sure I do not fill a coward's or a traitor's grave. Farewell again! God bless you, Mark, and yours!" He was gone.

Throughout that fateful night, Sebastopol remained in a state of tumultuous agitation. Exciting addresses were delivered in all the churches by the Greek clergy to crowded military audiences—addresses sealed, hallowed by the subsequent mystic celebration in midnight masses of the Last Supper and the Saviour's Passion—"Do this in remembrance of me!" Grosser, but much more pardonable stimulants, were plentifully distributed; and the Russian host poured forth to battle and assured victory, inflamed, drunken, alike with fanaticism and brandy

About seven in the morning, Kriloff, who had been absent all night, came in. Even his earthly, wooden nature appeared to be moved by a sense, if a dim one, of the greatness of the issues about to be submitted to the bloody arbitrament of battle.

"You are early up, Mr. Henderson," he said (I had not so much as thought of bed or sleep): "for my part, I could not rest if I tried. But where is your friend Mr. Hartmann?"

"I have not seen him this morning."

"Ah, a soldier of service he, who could sleep, I doubt not, during the pauses of a *bataille rangée*. Every minute now," added the major, "is worth a hundred soldiers to holy Russia."

He drew out his watch, placed it on the table, and eagerly noted the progress of the hands. I did the same, my eyes glued to the dial; and so nervous, fascinated, did I quickly become, that it required a strong effort of will to wrench away my gaze, and jump up from the chair with the intention of taking refuge with my aunt and cousin.

Kriloff did the same at the same moment. What's that?" he exclaimed.

"Do you mean," said I, "the shaking of the window, that"——

"Window! *Tonnerre d'enfer*, that is no window! Hark again! it is volleyed musketry; and that muttering thunder is the roll of drums! The mask is dashed aside at last, and they are fairly at each others' throats! Well, God defend the right!"

"Amen!" The battle had indeed begun in furious earnest, as the swiftly deepening, widening thunder of artillery, the as rapidly increasing flashes of musketry and cannon-flame, in the direction of Inkermann, soon terribly testified. The surprise had not, apparently, been so complete as had been anticipated. Still, the British troops would be fighting at a frightful disadvantage. And Arthur Dalzell! What part had he

already played, or was now playing, in that bloody drama?

I sought shelter from these thoughts at my aunt's, and found her and Marian weeping, praying. I could do neither, blessed as the relief would have been; and I regained the street. It being Sunday, the great majority of the civilian inhabitants of Sebastopol were in the churches, where religious services—proclaimed by the incessant tolling of funeral bells to be masses for the dead and dying, falling by hundreds with every detonation of the tempest of fire raging over Inkermann—were celebrated by relays of popes, and did not cease for a moment. At about half-past nine o'clock, however, a thin stream of anxious people began to set in towards the entrance to the Inkermann-road; to reach which, in the most direct line, it was necessary to cross the Admiralty and Careening Harbours; the road itself running along the eastern margin of the Bay of Inkermann, as it is called; and which, in reality, is the inner portion of the great or main harbour. A considerable crowd was already there, watching, with pale looks, the continuous and fast-swelling influx of wounded soldiers; but no doubt appeared to be as yet entertained of ultimate victory. Albeit, as the morning wore on, a feeling of anxiety and distrust gathered strength; and in a crowded café, where I took refuge from the jostling crowd, exclamations of savage rage greeted the tidings which began to pour in soon after eleven o'clock. Presently, an officer

of rank, supporting himself upon the arm of an orderly, entered the place, and, in reply to an acquaintance, said in a low voice:

"It is a massacre, *mon cher*. The resistance is desperate—devil-like. Still, I think we must win at last." The friend said something, of which I only caught the word "surprise."

"It would have been complete, so far as our division was concerned," replied the new-comer, "but for an unaccountable act of madness, or treason. We had crept up unperceived to within about two hundred yards of an English battery, on their near right. In ten minutes, the unsuspecting gunners would have been quietly bayoneted at their posts, when an officer, whom the darkness did not permit me, though very close to him, to make out distinctly, suddenly wrenched a musket from a soldier, ran forward, and fired it, shouting the while like a demon. A score of muskets were levelled at him, with what effect I cannot say; but the mischief was, of course, irreparable; and a shower of round and grape saluted us from the battery, which had else been ours without resistance."

"Dalzell!" my heart whispered, as those words fell upon my ear. "Dalzell, no question!" and so impressed was I with the truth of that instinctive conjecture—my mind was so filled, as it were, with the hopes, the fears, to which it gave birth—that for a considerable time I was unheedful of what was passing around me. Rousing myself at last from the trance of

thought into which I had fallen, I heard a Russian official gruffly demand of a slightly wounded French officer just brought in, if his countrymen were yet engaged. "Yes," was the equally gruff rejoinder, "or I should not be here. Only a part though, as yet, of Bosquet's division; but the rest are not far off." This must have occurred about one o'clock.

The signs of defeat now multiplied apace; and by three o'clock it was acknowledged that the Russians had sustained a sanguinary repulse. The roar of battle died gradually away; the mob dispersed in sullen discontent; and each side was free to count the bloody cost—the Anglo-French, of victory; the Muscovites, of shameful overthrow. It was quite dark when I got back to the hotel, where I was much surprised to find my aunt and cousin. They had sent frequent written messages to me during the day, and, receiving no reply, had worked themselves into a panic of alarm for my safety, which nothing would allay but themselves ascertaining in person what had befallen me. We had not exchanged twenty words, when the landlord of the hotel, a civil, obliging person, informed me that I was asked for below. "A wounded Russian officer," he whispered, directly we were out of the room, "with hardly sufficient life remaining to bid the litter-bearers, who carried him off the field, bring him here It is your friend, Monsieur Hartmann!" added the man, in a still lower whisper, and with a perturbed stare. I sprang, without replying, down-

stairs. It was indeed poor Dalzell! At sight of me a smile gleamed over his pallid face; and, grasping me by the hand, he made a mighty effort—feeling, no doubt, that death would be swift and sudden with him—to acquaint me with the circumstances under which he had lost his life. "I know all," said I, interrupting; and I slowly and distinctly repeated what I had heard at the café. His grasp of my hand tightened as I spoke, and the darkening eyes flashed with a glow of military pride. "You think it was well done, Mark?" came from his lips in a pleased bubbling murmur.

"Think it well done! Ah! my brave friend, it is to the unshrinking devotion of such hearts as yours that England owes her glory and her greatness."

"You will tell Viola—Marian!" he murmured yet more faintly than before, "and that—that"——

He fainted, and I thought he was gone; but pungent restoratives brought back consciousness, and I caused him to be gently carried upstairs and placed in bed. Slight delirium supervened, and for the next ten minutes the idle comments of his brain ran upon the incidents of the day in which he had taken part. The "light before death," as it is called, suddenly chased away those confused and shadowy images. His eye rekindled with intelligence, and his voice was full and clear, as he said: "Viola will hear from you, Mark Henderson, that my death was not unworthy of her, or of my name and country. Ah! sweet wife—fair child, had I but"——

A loud scream interrupted him, and in another moment the wife so tenderly apostrophised—guided by Marian—had clasped her dying husband in her arms, and was pouring forth a torrent of broken, passionate words—words of tenderest love, of bitterest grief, of undefined but direst apprehension.

"Blessings! blessings on you, Viola," interrupted the moribund, in that strange, solemn tone which cannot be mistaken—"on you, and on my child—blessings multiplied—unworthy as I"—— We listened intently for several minutes, but the voice returned not, and, looking more closely, I saw that he was dead!

I had cautioned the landlord not to inform Major Kriloff of what had occurred, and just after ten o'clock that gentleman came into the room where I sat alone, and swaggeringly announced that one Gabriel Derjarvin was below, by appointment, to meet Monsieur Hartmann. Gabriel Derjarvin was desired to walk up; and, after a moment's hesitation, he followed me to the death-chamber, Major Kriloff accompanying.

"We must see Monsieur Hartmann alone," said the major, as I opened the door.

"I shall not remain an instant. There, messieurs," I added, quickly withdrawing the concealing curtain—"there is Captain Dalzell!"

You might have felled them with a feather, and, at a sign from me, they followed downstairs like whipped spaniels.

"Captain Dalzell's papers, messieurs, apprise me of

the particulars of the bargain you hoped to conclude with him; and I now inform you that, unless Madame Dalzell's legacy be immediately forthcoming, and passports for our departure provided, I shall at once place those papers in the hands of Prince Menschikoff."

The terror of the villains was really pitiable: they promised everything, and effectually—the money and passports were forthcoming the next day but one. On the 20th of the month—four days after the terrific storm in the Black Sea—my aunt and cousin embarked with me at Yalta; and on the 18th of January, 1855, the *Saucy Gipsy* dropped her anchor off Staten Island —all well.

I have little more, I think, to add likely to interest the reader, except that Ruth Garstone condescended to become Mrs. Mark Henderson on the very day, I well remember, that intelligence of the death of the Czar, with — startling appositeness of retribution! — the echoes of a Turkish victory upon Russian soil, the first for two centuries, sounding in his dying ears—reached America. I may add that Ruth—but it is young days with us yet—is the same provoking, saucy gipsy as——

"Take my advice, Mark, and leave that out, or no sensible person will credit a word you have been writing."

"You there, wifie! I was not aware you were peeping over my shoulder."

"Neither should I have been here, but for my usual

silly good-nature prompting me to come and tell you that Dr. Burton says the operation has been capitally performed, and that dear Aunt Viola will see again as well as ever. Cousin Marian is crying for joy; and, as young Carden seemed inclined to sympathetic tears, I slipped away."

"Young Carden, of Wall-street! What sympathy should he feel with Marian's joy or sorrow?"

"Now, is not that a sensible question? Positively, Mark, you can have no eyes in your head; or, if you have, they must want couching quite as much as aunt's did."

"Well, that may be a fact, and accounts for the blunder I made some time ago, in mistaking a certain damsel for a divinity, whereas"——

"There! do hold your tongue; so much scribbling is turning your brain—it is indeed! Now, don't be ridiculous, Mark"——

"Ain't that owdacious now!" chuckled my father, who that moment looked in; "two months married, and kissing! Well!"

"Your son, Mr. Henderson!" exclaimed Ruth, flaming up as red as fire, "is one of the rudest, most unmannerly"——

"It's nothing tc nobody," interrupted the deaf mariner, with a consenting nod. "It's what *is* right, only it shouldn't keep other people's dinner waiting."

The Romance of Common Life.

No. 3.—THE MURDER AT ENFIELD.

A TALE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

The quiet village of Enfield in Warwickshire, situated within easy riding distance of the town of Coventry, is nestled in one of the pleasantest spots to be found even in that country of sylvan nooks and corners. Wood and river, hill and dale, combine to gladden and diversify its tranquil loveliness, its peace-breathing solitude. With what a courteous majesty do the grand old woods, in which the hamlet lies, as it were, enframed, wave welcome to the traveller who passes their green portals! They see—wise, ancient trees are they, which have looked upon and beckoned to the foolish world for centuries—that he has just

come up from the hot, stifling cities, of whose daily-increasing turmoil and uproar the tainted and unquiet winds unceasingly inform them; and they, with their leafy fans, strive to free him from the heat and dust they know he must have contracted there. The river —a hard worker in other localities—a carrier of great burthens—takes holiday here: prolongs his stay by many a devious winding through green meads margined by the pensile willow, which stoops down to kiss and glass itself—as mourning beauties love to do—in his clear mirror; and murmurs, as he departs over the pebbly boundary, sad but musical regrets that he must perforce pass on to return and disport himself there no more for ever!

So calmly-beautiful is the village in its ordinary working-day aspect; but on the day to which I would more especially direct the attention of the reader, the holy stillness of the Sabbath rested upon and deepened its quiet peacefulness. The rustic worshippers had issued forth of the village church, where God's words of peace had been expounded to them, into the temple of his works, where every sight and sound, tree, stream, and flower, was eloquent with the same inspired message. Surely, then, amidst an unsophisticated, sequestered community, nurtured by such divine homilies as these, there could be found no hearts tainted, corrupted by the vices, the fierce and evil passions, which seethe and ferment in the crowded cities of the world!

He that thinks so is little read in the human heart.

Observe that somewhat straggling group of four persons walking slowly up the declivity yonder in the direction of the rather pretentious cottage, whose new red-brickedness, but that it is almost wholly concealed by the trees which surround it, would be so vile a blot on the fair landscape. One of them is an old man—at least his hair is gray, and his face deeply furrowed; a fair girl holds him by the arm; and two young men —farmers, or farmers' sons, of rather a high class apparently—walk with an air of unquiet bashfulness by their side. Well, the strongest, fiercest passions that ever stirred and ruled the human heart are raging in the breast of three at least of that small group. Avarice, stronger than death; love, tumultuous, unreasoning, headlong; black envy, hatred, jealousy, despair, reign there in scarcely-disputed mastery, preparing the as yet unconscious, unapprehensive actors for their parts in one of those terrible dramas which passion, uncontrolled by conscience, sometimes exhibits for the warning and instruction of a startled community; and the memory of which will long linger amid the quiet haunts of Enfield and the surrounding neighbourhood: for the story, reader, which I am about to relate is in its essentials strictly *true;* as far, at least, as absolute truth may be predicated of any record in which imperfect or scanty information on minor points, however industriously sought and carefully collated, may have led to error with respect to incidents of slight prominence or of secondary interest.

I.

The gray-haired man I have pointed out was Amos Leveridge: his age might have been about fifty-five or fifty-six; but worldly care, a ceaseless, eager pursuit of gain, had bowed his form and blanched his locks with premature old age. He had been many years in business in Coventry in the lace and ribbon trade, and had amassed a very considerable fortune, when, to use a much-hackneyed expression, the sudden transition of the nation from a state of war to a state of peace, so for a time depressed the commerce and paralysed the industry of the country, that Amos Leveridge was glad to catch at what, under the circumstances, he deemed an advantageous offer for the stock and goodwill of his business, and retire with his accumulated savings into the ease and security of a non-trading life. He chose Enfield as a retreat for no other reason than because Warwick Villa—the red-brick excrescence I have indicated, of which he had obtained cheap possession in consequence of the bankruptcy of its builder and proprietor—did not let, and it was therefore a considerable saving to dwell in it himself. To mere beauty, whether mundane or celestial, he was profoundly insensible. The stars of heaven, the flowers of earth, glittered and exhaled utterly unheeded by Amos Leveridge, whose daily meditations and nightly dreams were of his beloved money-heaps. On the morning of every

quarter-day, punctually as it arose out of eternity, the old man set off for Coventry, where he had large house-property, to draw his rents, returning home on the following evening. These journeys, which he performed on horseback, marked the chief epochs of his life; and ponderings over the nett produce of the last, and preparations for the next gathering, its chief business and delight. Amos had been once wedded; obtaining, it was said, by his marriage not only a gentle and industrious wife, but, in his then circumstances, an important sum of money. She died several years before his retirement from trade. The only issue of the union was Fanny Leveridge, the fair girl walking by her father's side towards home. Beautiful exceedingly, very graceful, and tolerably educated was she, and withal fully conscious of her attractions, both as a handsome woman and a rich heiress I cannot say that her father loved her with the deep affection which parents usually feel for an only and dutiful child: he was too much absorbed in Mammon-worship for that. But he was at least proud of his daughter, and occasionally thought, not without exultant self-gratulation, upon the time—a distant one of course it must be, for how could his selfishness endure to forego the attentive ministrations of so affectionate a child?—when he might see her the rich and honoured wife of some rich, great man; too rich and great, too much in love —so ran his dreams — to need or heed a dowry.

Feelings of arrogant selfishness like these caused him, it will be readily supposed, to look with extreme dislike and uneasiness upon present suitors, especially if of the class to which both he and his daughter belonged; and unfortunately pretenders of that stamp were, to his great annoyance and dismay, somewhat numerous. Two especially, who now accompanied them from church, had manifested a resolution, a pertinacity, which no adverse hints, no studied coldness, no contemptuous rudeness on his part, could abate or overcome. Perhaps the daughter's smiles more than compensated for the father's frowns; but, even if so, they would seem to have been very impartially distributed between the rivals, if one might judge by the beaming light which flashed upon both her worshippers as she curtseyed farewell to them from within the gate her father had just rudely slammed in their faces. The young men turned silently away, and in silence pursued their path homewards, which lay for a considerable part of the road in the same direction. Whatever feeling was throbbing in their veins or gnawing at their hearts found no outward manifestation—in words at least. They walked moodily along, chewing the cud of sweet or bitter fancy, without uttering a syllable; till, arrived where their paths diverged, a coldly-civil "Good-day!" was interchanged, and each passed on with a freer air and heartier stride to his own dwelling.

William Collins, the eldest by a few months of these

lovers and rivals, was about six-and-twenty years of age, well-looking, and of fair character. Young as he was, he was a comparatively wealthy tenant of the nobleman whose estates comprise so large a portion of the division of the county in which Enfield is situated. His father and father's father had cultivated Holm Farm, and he, an only son, had succeeded to the tenancy about three years before, and had so industriously and prudently conducted himself as to win golden opinions from the whole country-side as a careful, quick-witted, rising man. William Collins was somewhat better liked by Amos Leveridge—if, indeed, the faint preference displayed by the stern old miser could be properly called liking—than his rival Edmund Atherton; but—and the knowledge or suspicion haunted him like a demon—Atherton stood highest, he hated to believe, in the good graces of the daughter. There is no doubt, either, that, sincerely, passionately as William Collins now loved the fair Fanny, her charms as an heiress had, at first at all events, entered largely into his estimate of the advantages of such a match. Now his youthful ardour, stimulated by the intoxicating society of the lady, and the sharp spur of rivalship, had o'erleaped all considerations of pelf and profit; but originally, there is little question, he was quite as much dazzled by the pecuniary as the personal charms of his mistress. He was far too thrifty a young man to have been lured into Hymen's net save by the glittering of gold beneath the meshes; but, once

caught therein, egress was difficult, if not impossible; and he yielded, as men in such circumstances usually do, passively and resignedly to his fate.

Edmund Atherton was a man of another stamp, differently moulded by both nature and education. He was not, perhaps, a whit better-looking than William Collins, but more lithe, agile, vigorous; less thrifty too, it was said; but also the less needing thrift, as the two hundred and odd freehold acres which he farmed were his own—bequeathed by his father about a twelvemonth previously. He had been at one time intended for one of the liberal professions, and partially educated with that view; but his unconquerable predilection for a country life—his vehement love of field-sports, in which he greatly excelled—induced his parents to forego their purpose, and permit him to follow the bent of an inclination which prompted him to tread the safe and beaten paths leading to competence and ease, rather than attempt to scale the dizzy heights, o'erstrewn with pitfalls, where fame and fortune seem waiting to crown the rash enthusiast. His mother still survived—a strong-hearted, strong-minded woman, whom I many times have had the pleasure of conversing with: she was, I think, a native of Cumberland—at all events of the north of England, or of one of the southern Scottish counties, and had been, I understood, brought up in the Presbyterian faith and discipline. Her lot, however, having been cast in a land of "prelacy," she, with her nus-

band, attended divine service in the parish church of Enfield—two of the most earnest and devout of the congregation which knelt and worshipped there. Habitually reserved, and somewhat formal, Mrs. Atherton was regarded by persons who did not look beneath the surface as a frigid, cold-hearted woman. They knew her not: within that grave and somewhat stern exterior there dwelt a perennial, ever-swelling fount of sympathy and tenderness, which, whenever the voice of affection, of suffering, or of want smote upon the apparent rock, gushed forth in plenteous loving-kindness, mercy, and compassion. This noble mother Edmund Atherton loved and honoured as such a mother should be loved and honoured; whilst his affection for Fanny—the beautiful Fanny—was as enthusiastic and unselfish as his own ardent and unselfish nature. He loved her for herself alone, and would gladly have relinquished all present and prospective claim to the father's money-bags for a favourable acceptation of his suit for the daughter's hand.

I have said that, judging from the demeanour of Fanny Leveridge to the young men when they took leave of her and her father after escorting them home from church, she appeared to feel no marked preference for either of them. But this leave-taking occurred, it must be remembered, in the broad, open day, beneath a garish sunlight, utterly inappropriate to, and uncongenial with, the coy and timid glances with which

reserved and modest maidens recognise and reward accepted affection. On the evening of that same Sunday—just as the faint beams of the setting autumnal sun were feebly lingering on bright flowers and glancing streams, clinging with a last embrace to the beautiful; and the silver stars, one by one, shone forth upon a world once more in need of, and grateful for, their tremulous and tender light—Edmund Atherton leapt the low garden-wall of Warwick Villa, and, after waiting with exemplary patience till it suited the convenience or caprice of the lady to join him, was permitted, not only to pour forth, unchecked by voice or gesture, the vows of love and eternal constancy which flow so glibly from the lips of youth, but to read in her delighted eyes an answer to which no eloquence of words could have added force or meaning.

Not unmarked was this stolen meeting. William Collins had observed the entrance of his hated rival into the garden, had followed him unperceived, and himself, concealed by the thickly-growing trees and shrubs, overheard each syllable of a conversation which confirmed his worst fears, and filled him with fury and despair. Excited—almost maddened—he hurried to the house, and, demanding speech of Amos Leveridge, briefly informed him that Edmund Atherton and his daughter were in the garden planning and arranging the means of effecting a private marriage. A detestable falsehood, by the way, and invented by Collins as a means of kindling the old

man's passions, and rousing him to take summary and decisive measures for breaking off a connection which boded ruin to his own hopes. Leveridge started as though a serpent stung him, and, jumping up, hastened into the garden with frantic rage. Collins, satisfied with the success of his device, quietly retired.

The lovers were just about to part.

"But suppose, dearest," Edmund Atherton was saying—"suppose this unreasonable obstinacy of your father should continue unchanged? You are of age, my mother, who, you know, would consent to nothing wrong, approves her son's choice, and"——

"I will never leave my father, nor marry without his consent," interrupted Fanny Leveridge somewhat reproachfully.

"There is no necessity for leaving him; there is ample room at Elm Lodge for"——

The speaker was checked by a fierce execration from Amos Leveridge, whose approach over a soft greensward had been unnoticed, followed by a furious blow, which made him reel several paces backwards. The hot blood suffused the face and temples of the indignant young man; and in the first impulse of his passion he raised his arm to return the blow with interest. With difficulty he mastered himself, and, in a voice trembling with ill-suppressed rage, exclaimed, "Thank your grey hairs, sir, or rather thank your daughter, that I do not resent as it deserves your brutal assault upon me; but that"——

His words were drowned in the torrent of invective and abuse which the furious old man showered upon him. Every epithet which a coarse and excited imagination could devise was hurled at him, in tones so loud and fierce that passers-by gathered to the spot and listened to the altercation. Miss Leveridge, trembling, fainting with terror, clung nervously to her father, imploring Edmund to leave the place. He at length complied, exclaiming as he sprang over the dwarf enclosure, and alighted amidst the gaping bystanders, "You will repent this abominable outrage, Mr. Leveridge, depend upon it, and that, too, before many hours have passed over your head." A natural expression, that might fairly be interpreted to allude to the regret likely to be felt by any man of the slightest generosity of mind, when, upon calm reflection, he finds he has been betrayed into momentary injustice; but which, illustrated by after events, acquired unfortunately a terrible and fatal significance.

One of the lookers-on was William Collins, of whose agency in bringing about the humiliating scene from which he had just escaped Edmund Atherton was of course wholly ignorant. Collins, the more effectually to conceal his malicious meanness, as well as to enjoy the writhings of his favoured rival, as he probed and irritated the festering wound, affected great indignation at the conduct of Amos Leveridge. Atherton, too much excited and indignant to heed such thinly-masked irony, walked fiercely but silently on in the

direction of his home, accompanied by Collins and a Farmer Elliot, who had witnessed the assault and subsequent abuse of his young friend by Amos Leveridge with unaffected pain and disgust.

"Don't take it to heart, Edmund," said the blunt well-meaning man, just before he and Collins, whose roads lay in the same direction, took leave of their impatient companion: "Your father's son may look higher than to the dainty piece of goods yon doited old curmudgeon seems by his talk to think good enough for a lord. I don't see anything very extraordinary in her myself, and, considering the sort of father she has, I trow you are well rid of her, Edmund: that's my opinion."

"This very consolatory effusion appeared, much to Farmer Elliot's surprise, to increase instead of allaying the irritation of the person to whom it was addressed, who abruptly changed the conversation, by asking Collins "if partridges were as plentiful in the Holm Covers this year as formerly?"

"Quite so, at least so I hear; for I seldom go out myself. Why don't you step over, as you used to do, and beat them up? My leave, you know, is sufficient."

"Thank you: I will; perhaps to-morrow."

"To-morrow is Michaelmas-day, and I shall not be at home. I have been at last obliged to discharge that incorrigible rascal and poacher Tom Carter."

"A good riddance," interjected Farmer Elliot.

"Yes, but he's a handy fellow notwithstanding, and can do a capital day's work when he pleases. I must

be off to the fair to hire some one else in his stead; and by coach, too, I'm thinking—for Leveridge, as usual, borrows my mare for his Coventry journey; he prefers her, he says, to any horse he can hire."

"No doubt—no doubt," chuckled Elliot, "one can easily believe that."

"But if you will say Tuesday," continued Collins with much friendly semblance, "I shall be glad, very glad to see you at Holm Farm after your day's sport, and have a humming glass together, as we used to do 'lang syne.'"

"Amos Leveridge returns from Coventry on Tuesday evening by your house, does he not?"

"Yes."

"Does he stop?"

"For a minute or so only, just to leave the mare."

"Well, then, I'll run over the Holm Covers on Tuesday, and call in on my return."

A few moments afterwards Edmund Atherton had shaken hands with his two companions, and was hastening at a rapid pace towards Elm Lodge.

II.

The next morning, exact as the clock, Amos Leveridge mounted the borrowed horse, duly brought to his door by Tom Carter; and, once more enjoining his daughter—whose countenance still bore traces of the previous evening's emotion—to keep strictly within

doors during his absence, took the heavy riding-whip proffered by Carter, and, turning the horse's head to the Coventry road, essayed to move on.

"If you please, sir," said Tom Carter, holding the horse's head firmly by the bit, and pulling a shaggy forelock—"if you please, sir, I shall not be at the farm when you return: I be discharged."

This information was volunteered by Carter for the equitable purpose of obtaining present payment of the half-crown fee which Amos Leveridge was in the habit of paying him when he left the mare at Holm Farm on his return home.

This quarterly payment constituted an annuity which Amos had often, with much bitterness, reflected amounted to a year's legal interest of ten pounds. He had been unfortunately driven, the first time he had borrowed Collins's mare, to create so extravagant a precedent, by his stupid neglect to provide himself with small silver change; and he had since been unable, from very shame, to diminish the amount of the gratuity. Here was an opportunity of ridding himself of the onerous payment altogether, and he eagerly embraced it.

"I am sorry to hear it, Carter, and I wish you a better place than the one you have lost." He then struck the horse sharply with his spurs, and attempted to ride on; but Carter held resolutely by the bridle, spite of the efforts of the mare to free herself.

"But, sir," remonstrated the man, observing Leveridge shift ends with the loaded riding-whip he had given him—"but, sir"——

He had time to say no more: the heavy butt end of the whip descended with great force upon the hand which grasped the bit: the sudden pain forced him to loose his hold, and the mare darted off at speed.

"Curse thee for a cowardly skin-flint!" shouted Carter, shaking his fist with impotent rage at the exulting horseman, who was speedily out of sight and hearing. An instant afterwards, a dark and meaning smile passed over the fellow's sinister features, and he muttered, "Thou shalt pay for that blow in pocket and person too, if the Devil will only grant me the chance I have long dreamt of!"

A slight noise broke in upon his soliloquy, and he looked hurriedly round, fearful of having been observed or overheard. His fears were groundless. Miss Leveridge had re-entered the house several minutes before; no other person was within sight or hearing; and, satisfied that his dark thoughts were known only to himself, he turned his sullen steps towards Holm Farm, so long his home, but which at twelve o'clock on that day he was to quit for ever. Mischief is indeed swift to enter into the thoughts of desperate men.

On the following day Edmund Atherton, as he had promised Collins, took his gun and dogs and walked over to the Holm Covers, as they were called. The

game was abundant, and the sun was rapidly declining before the eager sportsman could tear himself from his beloved pastime. At length hunger and fatigue compelled his still reluctant steps towards Holm Farm, where he determined to rest himself thoroughly before proceeding home. He had approached within about a quarter of a mile of Collins's residence, when a splendid covey of partridges started up, whirred past, and settled down again at an inconsiderable distance. His gun was unloaded, indeed his wads were all used up, but the temptation was irresistible. He hastily reloaded, and for wadding tore off part of a letter he found in one of his pockets. He moved swiftly and stealthily along; but, before he could approach within shooting distance, the birds were up again, and off out of sight and ken. The disappointed sportsman resumed his path towards Holm Farm, muttering, "I shall perhaps get a shot, if it's not too dark, on my way home."

William Collins was not at home; but a woman-servant, who opened the door, informed Atherton that her master was expected every minute. He had told her Mr. Atherton would call, and desired her to say that he should be glad if he would make himself at home, and await his arrival: refreshments, the woman added, were placed ready in the parlour. Atherton, tired and heated, gladly accepted the invitation; pulled off his velveteen shooting-jacket, and placed it with his hat on a chair in the outer room beside his

still loaded gun; he then entered the parlour, and fell to with a hearty relish upon the substantial fare set before him. The servant came in after the lapse of a few minutes to ask if there was anything else he required, as she had to go to Enfield on some errand, and would take advantage of his being there to set out before it grew dark. He replied that he wished for nothing more than she had provided, and a few minutes afterwards the woman left the house. Atherton made a hearty dinner, and drank somewhat freely of his host's ale, and then, feeling drowsy, stretched himself upon the sofa, before which lay his dogs, also spent with toil, and was soon fast asleep.

Carter, who had been prowling about Holm Farm the whole day, marked the departure of the servant, whom he believed to be the sole occupant of the house; for he had not observed Atherton's entrance, and, as soon as she was out of sight, rapidly approached the door. His intention, it was afterwards ascertained, was to procure his late master's gun, which he knew was always kept loaded over the parlour mantelpiece. He could execute the devilish project he had conceived, he calculated, and return the gun to its place before it was missed. As he entered the door, his eye fell upon the shooting-jacket with large pearl buttons, the straw-hat made of alternate strips of white and black plait, and the silver-mounted gun of Edmund Atherton: he recognised them in an instant. Cautiously venturing on, he peeped through the glazed

parlour door, and saw the owner of the articles sound asleep. Swiftly he returned to the hall, and examined the gun: it was doubtless loaded, for the cap was on the nipple. To make sure, he drew the ramrod, and ascertained beyond a doubt that it was so. "Well," thought the villain, and a Satanic grin exaggerated the natural ferocity of his countenance, "the Devil does sometimes help his own at a pinch, that's certain." In a twinkling his smock-frock and hairy cap were thrown off; and, arrayed in Edmund Atherton's jacket and hat, and armed with his gun, the assassin stole swiftly forth, and hurried to the spot where he had determined to await his victim. It was close upon the hour of Amos Leveridge's return, and he dreaded lest, by delay, his prey should escape him. He was soon posted in his lurking-place, and his patience and resolution were not exposed to a very lengthened trial. Ten minutes had scarcely passed, though in the eager and morbidly-active imagination of the murderer an hour seemed to have limped slowly by, when the well-known trot of the mare was heard; and presently, turning a sharp angle of the road, appeared the doomed man, riding in contented sleepiness, slowly and unconsciously, along towards an instant eternity. He had approached within about a dozen paces of the fatal spot, when the muzzle of the assassin's gun was slowly raised, the fiery discharge belched forth, and, tossing his arms wildly in the air, the murdered man fell heavily to the ground, and the terrified mare sprang off at a gallop

towards Holm Farm. Carter was hastening forward to secure the booty for which he had perilled soul and body, when his steps were arrested by shouts of "Villain! assassin! scoundrel!" proceeding from a field which overhung, so to speak, the deeply-cut road, or rather lane where Leveridge had fallen. Carter looked up, and beheld Mr. James Simpson, the stalwart schoolmaster of Enfield, running eagerly along the thick hedge which kept him from the road, in search of an opening by which he might descend, flourishing his stout black-thorn stick, and shouting as he ran with furious energy. Cowardly as ferocious, the murderer, abandoning at once all hope of the expected booty, turned and fled for life. Simpson roared after him—"I know you, Edmund Atherton! villain! murderer! madman! Stop him! seize him!" he continued, observing the figure of a man emerge at some distance from the wood almost directly in the path of the flying miscreant. "Arrest him, Mr. Collins," he shouted with stentorian power, as he recognised the new-comer; "he has murdered Amos Leveridge!"

His injunction would be, it at first seemed, fulfilled. Collins, astonished and bewildered by what he saw—Edmund Atherton fleeing towards Holm Farm, pursued by cries of "villain" and "murderer"—nevertheless rapidly neared the fugitive. He had approached within about twenty paces of him, when the man turned, lifted his broad-brimmed hat, and disclosed the features of his discharged servant. "Carter!" ex-

claimed the pursuer, stopping short. A significant smile passed over the villain's features as he rejoined, in a meaning tone, "Yes, master, I." Collins seemed rooted to the spot; and the assassin continued his flight—*unfollowed!*

"Why did you not arrest him?" demanded Simpson, who had descended into the road, and was busy, when Collins approached, examining the state of the wounded man.

"He was too quick for me," Collins replied in a husky voice.

"No matter—no matter; we shall find him fast enough: he cannot escape. See, here is part of a letter used as wadding which I have found still smouldering close to the body. To think that Edmund Atherton should have committed such a crime as this for the mere love of a black-eyed wench; or, worse, to avenge a foolish insult offered by an old man!"

William Collins replied not, and, to conceal his tell-tale countenance, bent down over the body in apparently anxious scrutiny.

"He still breathes!"

"Yes; but in my belief he is, notwithstanding, hurt past all surgery. However, as whilst there is life they say there is also hope, let us make as easy a litter as we can, and carry him on to Enfield. It is useless waiting for help in this solitary place; and we shall be more likely to meet with assistance on the direct road, than if we were to turn off towards your house."

This was instantly set about; and the dying man, with the help readily procured as they drew near the village, was rapidly conveyed home.

In the meanwhile Carter had safely reached Holm Farm. Edmund Atherton still slept, and with frenzied haste the wretched murderer divested himself of his borrowed apparel, resumed his frock and cap, and hurried off for life—life—life, by the most secret by-ways known to him, out of the neighbourhood; and then more leisurely, though scantily furnished for such a journey, towards London, the universal receptacle for all celebrities and all infamies who happen to imagine or find the provinces too narrow or too hot for them. Carter counted a good deal, for at least present impunity, upon the avenger of blood being put on the wrong scent. His late master could, it was true, denounce him, and save Edmund Atherton; but would he? A ferocious laugh burst from the lips of the cunning villain as, after weighing the probabilities of the case by the aid of his knowledge of the character of Collins, he arrived at a not unsatisfactory conclusion. "If it depend on him, Atherton will be hanged; and then, my fine master, Holm Farm is as much mine as thine." In the meantime it was necessary to do something for present support; and so readily does the freemasonry of crime introduce to congenial companionship, that Carter, before many days had elapsed, was a recognised associate of some of the most daring felons that infested the metropolis.

It was quite dark when Edmund Atherton awoke from the profound slumber into which he had fallen. His host, he found, was not yet arrived, neither had the servant returned. "These autumn evenings are somewhat chilly," mourned the scarcely-awaked young man; "I had better, at all events, put on my coat." He did so, resumed his seat, and waited for some time longer with tolerable patience. At length, wearied with delay, he determined to take his departure; but, first lighting a candle by the kitchen embers, he wrote a brief, apologetic note, which he left on the table, addressed to Collins. He then quitted the house, quite satisfied that in that neighbourhood no risk to its owner's property was thereby incurred. "I will go round by Warwick Villa," thought he. "It is a good way about, but the walk will warm me, and perhaps Fanny will be at one of the windows." Upon such slight chances of obtaining but a shadowy glimpse of the beloved one will young men, inspired by genuine passion, waste time and exertion! The circuitous route he had chosen led him to within about two hundred yards of the dwelling of Amos Leveridge. There was, he could perceive, a hurrying to and fro of lights in the lower apartments of the house; and shadows of men and women flitted in and out of the rooms. "They have company, I suppose, to welcome the old man's return; an unusual occurrence, to say the least of it. No matter, I at any rate should be no welcome guest just now." He sighed, as men in love will sometimes

sigh, and hastened on. He was within about a quarter of a mile of Elm Lodge, when he became conscious that his footsteps were dogged by several persons, who, however, manifested no disposition to overtake him, slowly as he now walked. Presently two men, whom he knew well—they were the chief constables of the hundred—rapidly approached, coming from the direction of Elm Lodge. The men behind shouted loudly the instant the new-comers appeared in sight, and those immediately replied by a hail of intelligence. Edmund Atherton felt that these signals, for some unaccountable reason, referred to himself; and he noticed that the men who had loitered behind now came swiftly up, so that both parties were in a few minutes close upon him.

"Edmund Atherton," said Mr. Harris, the head constable, with an expression more of sorrow than of anger, "it is my painful duty to arrest you on the charge of wilful murder."

"How?" exclaimed the astonished young man, starting back, and at the same time instinctively raising his fowling-piece, whilst his dogs sprang forward with loud yells.

"Violence, unhappy man, is useless here," replied Mr. Harris quickly; and, springing forward, he seized the barrel of the gun. The rest of the *posse comitatus*, following his example, closed in upon their quarry, and Atherton and his dogs were in an instant overpowered.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?" demanded the prisoner, as, panting and bleeding, he vainly strove to resist being handcuffed.

"You know as well as I do, Mr. Atherton," replied the constable. "Amos Leveridge, whom you doubtless thought to have killed outright, has survived sufficiently long to make a declaration, which, combined with other evidence, will hang you if you had a thousand necks. Come along!"

Consternation and surprise rendered the unfortunate young man speechless, and not another word was exchanged between him and his rough captors till, after thrusting him into the untenanted cell of the village gaol or cage, Harris, having carefully searched his person, bade him a stern "Good-night!"

Amos Leveridge had been brought to his home, and laid upon a couch amidst the frantic outcries and lamentations of his daughter, who, strange as it may to some appear, felt for the old miser the tenderest affection. Medical aid was immediately sent for; and, powerful restoratives having been administered, the dying man, when the surgeon, a Mr. Mostyn, arrived, was perfect sensible, though sinking fast. Mr. Mostyn examined the wound, and then looked with unmistakeable meaning in the sufferer's face.

"There is no hope then?" murmured Amos Leveridge in a low, husky voice. "I thought so; but it is a bitter thing to die, and leave—leave—— O God, have I heaped up wealth but to perish by a dog's death

like this?" He gnashed his teeth with demoniac rage, the gloom of a frightful despair settled gradually upon his pallid features, and large drops of agony ran down his forehead. His daughter pressed a cordial to his lips, and, momently strengthened, he partly raised himself on one arm, and with a ghastly look, in which terror and hate struggled for predominance, glared wildly upon the spectators as he exclaimed, "Bear witness all of you to the words of a dying man: I have been basely murdered by Edmund Atherton."

"Did you see his face?" asked Mr. Simpson in a gentle voice, after a few moments' pause. "I did not; neither, it seems, did Mr. Collins."

"No, perhaps not his face," muttered Leveridge; "but what of that? It was growing dark; but I saw his dress—his coat, his hat: it was he, I tell you. And now," added the miserable man in a feeble, scarcely audible voice, "let every one except—except Fanny and William Collins leave the room."

His orders were obeyed. Fanny weeping hysterically, knelt at her father's side, and Collins, pale as marble, and shaking like an aspen, slowly approached from the further corner of the room, where till now he had been standing.

"Fanny," said Amos Leveridge, "you love that accursed villain?"

"I did, I did, father, but oh! do not suppose that I—that I"——

"That you would wed your father's murderer?"

No, girl—no, but—William Collins, come nearer. Fanny, you are my heir. I would not that my hard-earned savings should be squandered in idle follies when I am gone. William Collins is close—thrifty, and will add to the store instead of diminishing it; besides, it would punish, more than the gallows will the wretch who has destroyed me. Promise, Fanny, to marry Collins. Promise me, I say."

"But, father"——

"And let him know, Fanny, that his hanging will be your wedding day. Ha—ha—ha! that will be gall—wormwood—hell-fire! Promise—promise me, I say!"

"I do, father, if—if"——

"If me no ifs!" hoarsely murmured the expiring man. "He will be hanged: and then—then"——

The vindictive expression of the old man's features faded into the cold, passionless rigidity of death; the tenantless body fell heavily back upon the couch; and Amos Leveridge was no more!

Collins reached his home about an hour after the close of the scene I have just narrated, in a state of mind impossible accurately to portray. Exultation, dashed with fear and doubt; love—passion rather—whispering triumph, victory; avarice, with that dead old man's sinister smile pointing to dazzling heaps of gold; remorse, whose serpent fangs he felt already fastening on his heart—ruled him by turns. He was tossed to and fro in a chaos of conflicting emotions. A

first step in the fatal path of crime, of *murder*—the word *would* surge out of his palpitating brain—had been taken; and how, even if he were willing to do so, could he retrace that step without instant destruction to his character, to his hopes—without forfeiting the golden fortune almost within his grasp?

"Would to Heaven," he mentally exclaimed with intense bitterness of spirit—"would to Heaven I had not seen that villain's face, nor heard him speak; I had then obtained the prize without incurring this torturing burden of remorse and doubt. Suppose I make revelation of the truth, proclaim to the world that I indeed contemplated a profitable crime, but wanted courage to act out my purpose—what shall I by that means accomplish? Not only brand my own name with infamy, but bestow on Atherton, whom I loathe—abhor—a splendid fortune, and the only woman I ever did or ever shall love! He shall hang first! I am not capable of such heroic sacrifices. I suppose they *will* hang him; murder is seldom in this country visited with a less penalty: and, my evidence withheld, the circumstances press strongly against him. Horrible! But *I* did not plan or bring about those circumstances; and, if I offer no testimony against him, as I will not, how can it be said that I consign him to the scaffold? Carter alone knows that I recognised him, and he, for his neck's safety, will be silent. I run no risk; none—not the slightest. Then what an utter idiot I must be, when love and fortune cast their

treasures at my feet, not only at the bidding of coward conscience to spurn them from me, but bless, enrich another with their precious gifts! Riches, beauty, no fear, no risk! None but a madman would refuse to take this fortune at its flood! Edmund Atherton, you may count upon—my silence!"

With opiates such as these did William Collins strive to still the gnawings of the worm which, once awakened, dieth not; and for a time he partially succeeded.

III.

The excitement in and about Enfield, the thousand-and-one rumours and exaggerations which flew from mouth to mouth, may be imagined better than described. An express had been sent off the same evening for the county coroner, and, at about noon on the following day, that bustling and important functionary arrived; and an inquest on the body of the murdered man was immediately held.

As soon as the preliminary form of viewing the corpse had been gone through, and the jurors had returned to the vestry-room of the parish church, where, by the vicar's permission, the inquiry was held, Edmund Atherton, strongly guarded, was brought before them. He seemed to have quite recovered his usual serenity of temper and cheerfulness of spirit, as he looked boldly round the court with the air of an

injured man, whose innocence of the crime imputed to him would soon be made manifest to those who, doubtless misled by lying rumours, for the present thought so hardly of him. After bowing respectfully to the coroner, whom he slightly knew, he looked anxiously around for his mother, and was evidently hurt and disappointed that she was not present to witness his unquestionable triumph—she who must have felt so acutely the shame and agony of so foul an accusation! Mrs. Atherton was, however, in the vestry-room, though her son did not see her. She was seated, by her own desire, at the end of the apartment, concealed behind the bulky person of Farmer Brooks, who had escorted her to the court, and to whom she had expressed her resolution to hear the evidence against her son before she trusted herself to see or speak to him.

The first witness examined was Farmer Elliot. He related the particulars of the previous Sunday evening's quarrel between the deceased and the prisoner, and the menacing words used by the latter on leaving the garden.

"You say," said the coroner, "the prisoner intimated that the deceased would repent what he had done before many hours had passed?"

"Yes: his words at least were to that effect."

"Certainly," exclaimed Atherton, "I did make use of some such expression, but with no meaning of the kind you seem anxious to attach to it. I merely

intended to express my conviction that Mr. Leveridge would, upon reflection, regret the unprovoked assault he had committed upon me."

"You had better, I think, Mr. Atherton," observed the coroner, "reserve explanations of this nature for another tribunal. You have no legal adviser present, I believe; and it is therefore better for your own sake that you should not prejudice any defence you may hereafter be advised to offer, by ill-judged comments upon the evidence now to be adduced in support of this most serious charge."

"Tut—tut!" exclaimed the prisoner impatiently; "there is no serious charge in the case. It is a pure absurdity."

"This affected levity and carelessness ill become the position in which you are placed," retorted the coroner angrily; "and I must insist upon your keeping silence."

"Be it so," said Atherton. "Proceed; I will utter no word more."

Farmer Elliot next related the conversation which took place between the prisoner and Mr. Collins relative to shooting over the Holm Covers.

"Did not the prisoner specially inquire," was the next question, "whether the deceased would return that way from Coventry, before he accepted Mr. Collins's invitation?"

"Well—I think so. Yes, he did"

"And acceded to the proposal the instant he was

told the unfortunate gentleman would be sure to return home by that road?"

"Yes."

"This is another strained construction of words which had quite another meaning," cried the prisoner with irrepressible indignation. "But," he added more calmly, "it can be of no ultimate consequence: the truth must at last appear. Go on."

Mr. James Simpson was next called. As his evidence proceeded, the confidence of the prisoner visibly diminished; and, though he scarcely opened his lips during the remainder of the inquiry, it was evident that each succeeding deposition deepened the anxiety and alarm which the testimony of the schoolmaster had first awakened.

Mr. Simpson stated that on the previous evening, after dismissing his school, he had taken a longer stroll than usual in the direction of Holm coppice. He was considerably beyond Holm farmhouse when he saw the prisoner, as he believed, dressed in his ordinary shooting-jacket and peculiar straw-hat, pass by at a distance of about fifty paces. He was walking very rapidly, almost running, with his head turned in an opposite direction, so that witness could not see his face.

"What time was this, Mr. Simpson?" demanded the prisoner.

"About half-past six, I should think—perhaps a little later. I did not look at my watch, and therefore cannot speak with certainty on that point. I do not

think the prisoner noticed me. A few minutes afterwards I got over the gate of Farmer Elliot's ten-acre field, which, as we all know, runs along by Rockstone Lane or Road. I passed along by the hedge, and, from the comparatively considerable height at which I was walking, saw the prisoner enter a thicket just below where the direct road from Coventry turns into Rockstone Lane. Wondering what kind of game he could be seeking there, I watched his proceedings with some curiosity. No great time elapsed when the heavy trot of a horse broke upon the solitary silence of the place. The prisoner then bent eagerly forward, and, in a minute or so, Amos Leveridge was seen slowly approaching on Mr. Collins's bay mare. The unfortunate man had closely neared the spot where the prisoner stood in ambush, when the gun was suddenly raised, discharged, and the deceased fell from his horse mortally wounded." The witness next described how he had shouted after the prisoner, and called to Mr. Collins to arrest him, with other details already related. Mr. Simpson continued: "From the closeness of the discharge, the shot had no time to separate, and entered the breast of the deceased almost like a bullet. Near the body I perceived the wadding of the gun, blackened, and still smouldering. I picked it up, and found it to be part of a letter. I now produce it."

"Although you did not see the face of the person who fired at the deceased, have you any doubt that it was the prisoner?"

"Not the shadow of a doubt."

"Now, Mr. Harris," said the coroner, "please to inform us what you found in the prisoner's pockets upon searching him?"

"Amongst other things immaterial to the present inquiry, I found this portion of a letter."

The witness handed the torn paper to the coroner, who, after comparing it with the scorched and blackened fragment produced by Simpson, exclaimed with grave emphasis, "This is indeed the finger of Providence!" He then handed the pieces to the jury, who, after looking at them, stated through their foreman that their minds were made up, and that it would be quite useless to prolong the inquiry.

"I think, gentlemen," said the coroner blandly, "we had better go regularly through the evidence. In the meantime, as there can be no doubt of what your decision will be, the clerk will draw up a formal verdict for you to sign. The case indeed appears quite plain—shockingly so; but God forbid we should hastily pre judge the prisoner! Call the next witness."

The surgeon stated the cause of death, and repeated the declaration of the dying man.

"Was he *in articulo mortis?*" asked the coroner with magisterial emphasis; "and was he aware that he was so?"

"Both," replied the surgeon drily. "He was dying, and he knew it."

"He did not see the prisoner's face?"

"He seemed to admit that he did not. He, however, as I have stated, solemnly declared that he had been murdered by Edmund Atherton."

William Collins was the next witness examined. He was deadly pale, but he gave his evidence with considerable firmness. He corroborated, as far as he was concerned, the schoolmaster's testimony; and added, "that the fugitive had been too quick for him."

"Have you any doubt in your mind that the prisoner was the man you vainly endeavoured to arrest?" asked the coroner.

"I believe, sir," replied Collins, "I am here to state facts, not to offer opinions. I was near enough to plainly recognise Mr. Atherton's silver-mounted gun, as well as his coat and hat; but I did not see his face, and I am not disposed to say, for the present at least, any more upon the subject."

Other and minor evidence was received; and at its conclusion the coroner, abruptly addressing the prisoner, said, "You have nothing to say, I suppose, Mr. Atherton?"

"Nothing that would be believed here."

"Quite proper. Gentlemen of the jury, you will please return your verdict." This was instantly done, and, the jurors having duly signed it, the coroner issued his warrant for the committal of the prisoner to Warwick Gaol for trial at the next assize. He then declared the proceedings closed; and in a very few minutes only two or three persons besides the prisoner and constables remained in the vestry-room.

The aged vicar, who had been present during the whole of the investigation, whispered earnestly to the coroner for a brief space; after which that officer informed the prisoner that his mother had solicited to be allowed a private interview with him in that room, and, although it was not altogether regular, yet, in deference to the wishes of the venerable vicar, who had assured him that Mrs. Atherton was a highly respectable lady, he would grant her request; but at the same time he begged emphatically to warn the prisoner "that any attempt at escape would be quite futile, as not only the doors, but the outside of the building, would be strictly watched and guarded."

A slight expression of sarcastic contempt curled the prisoner's lip as he bowed his thanks for the favour conferred on him. The vicar, accompanied by the coroner, who motioned the constables to follow him, then left the vestry, and Edmund Atherton was alone with his mother.

Mrs. Atherton was still seated in the place she had occupied since the opening of the court. Her hands were tightly clasped, as if in earnest prayer, and her head, bowed in humiliation to the earth, was not raised as her son, hastily approaching her, exclaimed, "Mother—dear mother! were you here and I knew it not?"

Her hands unlocked, and were spread out, as if to forbid his near approach. "Yes," she replied in a constrainedly calm voice, as the afflicted young man recoiled before her expressive gesture. "Yes, Ed-

mund; I have heard all that has been said here to-day. More, perhaps, than that. I watched your sleep on Sunday evening—the love of a mother, Edmund, is very watchful!—and saw that your recent quarrel with that unhappy man pursued you in your dreams. You muttered—I now too well remember—strange threats of vengeance for the insult you had received. And now, before I dare trust myself to clasp you by the hand, or look upon your face, tell me—I conjure you by the memory of your departed father, by your trust in the Redeemer in whose faith you have been nurtured—has the Evil One had power, through your passions of love and hate, to push you to the commission of the fearful crime with which you are charged?"

A painful silence of some moments followed. The widow's hands tightened in their clasp, and were pressed firmly, as if to keep down some almost uncontrollable emotion, across her breast, and her bowed head drooped still lower to the earth. "Mother," at length exclaimed her son, in a calm, sad, slightly-reproachful voice, "with all my faults—and they are many—did you ever know me to be guilty of a falsehood?"

"Never—never! You were always truth itself."

"Then hear me declare to you—by the memory of my sainted father, by the deep love and reverence I have ever borne to you, by all my hopes of happiness beyond the grave, that of the foul deed of which they

accuse me, I am as innocent as a new-born, sinless child."

The tones of truth seldom miss their way to the heart. As he spoke, the widow's hands relaxed their convulsive clasp, the drooping body grew erect; and, as he concluded his emphatic declaration of innocence, she started up, a spasmodic cry of joy too mighty for articulate utterance struggling in her throat, clasped him with passionate emotion round the neck, and exclaimed, as soon as the convulsive joy which choked her speech permitted, "My son—my son! blessings—blessings on you for these words! And oh, praised and blessed he His name who has not ceased to have you—the child of many prayers—in His holy keeping! My brave, good boy," she continued, holding his head back with one hand, whilst with the other she strove to brush away the blinding tears which impeded her from gazing in his face, "how dared I doubt the truth and honesty engraven in every line of that beloved countenance? Oh, my son, forgive your mother!" And again she strained him in a passionate embrace.

"Ay, but, mother," said Edmund after the partial subsidence of Mrs. Atherton's emotion, "your conviction of my innocence will not avail to rebut the strange combination of circumstances arrayed against me."

"True—true, my son. We will presently take counsel together upon the human means to be employed to repel this terrible accusation. But the sting is gone. The perfect conviction of your innocence

which I now feel is a joy unutterable, which no earthly peril, even to you, can for the moment damp or lessen. You will bear the ordeal through which you will have to pass, I feel assured, as becomes your father's son. Be certain, Edmund, that it is a visitation in mercy; a warning not to build up your hopes, not to wrap up your soul in the weak vanities, the glittering delusion, of a false and transitory world. Your love for that girl, Edmund, was, I often feared, too much like idolatry to be pleasing in His sight, and required doubtless to be chastened, purified by trial and affliction. Many and various are the ways by which the Creator withdraws men from the world. Some through the cold and bitter passages of poverty and physical suffering; others through crushed affections, withered earthly twigs, on which perhaps they had too fondly leaned; some by the fiery trials of persecution, as your great grandsire—one of the stout old hill-side worshippers, who, as I have often related to you, fell valiantly fighting in defence of the right of man to worship God by the light of his own conscience. A great example! the influence of which will not depart the earth, for the memory of the just dieth not. There is, my son, a soul of goodness in all things, but especially in trial and adversity, if rightly used. You will bear this visitation as becomes a Christian man — in faith and patience; nothing doubting that the time will come when you will be enabled to say, with thousands of others, 'It was good for me to be afflicted.'"

In this manner did the strong-hearted mother, in accordance with the tenets of her earnest faith, seek to fortify the spirit of her son. She did not labour in vain. His eye gradually brightened with renewed confidence in his ultimate deliverance from the perils which environed him; and when his mother, warned by the vicar, who partially opened the door to announce that the interview could not be prolonged more than a few minutes, desired him to relate all the circumstances in any way bearing on the case with which he was acquainted, he complied with something of his wonted alacrity and cheerfulness.

"There is a strange mystery in all this," said Mrs. Atherton, after a thoughtful pause. "Some one during your slumber must have assumed your clothes, and used your gun. Strange! Collins?—No, it could not be Collins; no—good, but rash James Simpson's evidence precludes that suspicion. Has any one, I wonder, been missed from the neighbourhood? Robbery, doubtless, was the object."

A peremptory knock at the vestry-door interrupted and warned her that the moment of parting was arrived. She rose with a cheerful aspect, partly real, partly assumed perhaps, for the encouragement of her son. "Fear not, Edmund, that we shall be enabled to unravel this tangled web of circumstance. I will immediately consult and retain Baines, the attorney of Warwick: he is a sharp, able man, and knew your father. And to-morrow, Edmund, I will see Fanny

Leveridge, and say to her—I know she will believe me —'My son is innocent of the foul crime with which rash and credulous men have charged him.'"

A bright smile danced in the young man's eyes as he joyously replied, "Thanks—thanks, dear mother! That will, indeed, take away the sting and grief of the wound."

"Ay, dear boy, I saw where your thoughts were wandering. Well, she is, I think, a good girl, though not quite so sedate as I doubt not she will be after a few years of wedded life. They are impatient. Come."

The coroner had remained with the constables in order to see the prisoner safely off; and as Edmund Atherton stepped into the vehicle provided to convey him to Warwick Gaol, he said, addressing the widow with a lofty, condescendent civility, "Really, Mrs. Atherton, I sincerely pity you, as well as your son. Ours is an unpleasant duty, but"——

"Neither I nor my son need your pity, sir," interrupted Mrs. Atherton in a proud, repellent tone. "He, especially, is an object of envy rather, as all men are who patiently and bravely suffer unmerited reproach and calumny."

The mortified functionary drew back with an air of extreme surprise and disgust, and immediately gave the signal to proceed. Mrs. Atherton waved a last adieu to her son, and then with a proud and stately step turned towards Elm Lodge.

This stoicism of manner endured only as long as the eyes of strangers were upon her. Her step soon lost its firmness, her eye the expression of repellent pride which had coldly illumined it. Convinced as she was of her son's innocence, her confidence in the result yielded gradually to doubt, and doubt, before she had reached her dwelling, had wellnigh darkened to despair. The evidence she had heard delivered in the vestry-room, with its terrible coherency of circumstance, settled heavily and darkly upon her throbbing brain, shutting out all hope of her son's deliverance from the fearful peril which encompassed him. A servant-woman, who appeared to sympathise deeply with the anguish written on the pallid countenance of her mistress, opened the door before Mrs. Atherton had time to knock, and seemed about to speak, but was waved impatiently aside; and the grief-stricken mother passed on to the silence and privacy of her bedchamber. It was more than an hour afterwards when the woman, privileged servant as she was, ventured to disturb her mistress. She tapped gently at the door; it was presently opened, and she rejoiced to see that Mrs. Atherton's countenance no longer wore the despairing expression it did when she entered the house. A subdued hope, a resigned confidence in the providence of Him in whose love and fear she had walked humbly since she could lisp His name, shone in her mild sad eyes.

"You are better now, dear madam?" said the woman.

"Yes, Margaret. I trust in God, and in that trust feel privileged to have no other fear. But why did you knock?"

"Farmer Elliot has been here, and bade me tell you he has been informed that about half an hour after the mur——, after the death of Amos Leveridge, Tom Carter was seen hurrying along like mad across the fields towards Thornby"——

"Carter! What Carter?"

"He who used to work for Mr. Collins. The poacher—don't you remember?"

"Ah yes! Well, where is he?"——

A knock at the door interrupted her. It was Farmer Elliot himself. Mrs. Atherton hastened downstairs, and, after a brief conference with her visitor, it was arranged between them to give no hint of the suspicions which Carter's disappearance, and the strange manner of it, had excited in their minds, till Mr. Baines had been consulted, to whom Mrs. Atherton immediately despatched a note by a special messenger.

Mr. Baines the attorney, a sharp, active practitioner, arrived at Enfield, in obedience to Mrs. Atherton's pressing summons, on the next day. He had a long consultation with that lady, to which Farmers Brooks and Elliot were ultimately summoned. At its conclusion Mr. Baines announced that he should at once walk over to Holm Farm and see Mr. Collins.

William Collins had so easily got through the ex-

amination before the coroner; the case, without his *active* aid, appeared so conclusive against the prisoner, and he himself seemed so secured, so hedged in from the most remote suspicion of being in any way implicated in the affair, that his agitated spirits and wavering resolution had already calmed and settled down into a firm determination to clutch the golden opportunity which chance had flung in his way. When Mr. Baines called he was seated alone in his parlour, silently revelling in the glittering prospect which—no hateful barrier between—lay stretched invitingly before him.

"Baines—Baines," he audibly soliloquised, after directing the servant to admit his visitor. "I don't know the name: who can he be, I wonder?"

"One of that exemplary, but, alas! much slandered class of individuals known as attorneys," said that gentleman, entering the apartment.

"An attorney!" exclaimed Collins in some confusion. He had not thought the intruder so near. "What can an attorney want with me?"

"Not to serve you with a *capias*, Mr. Collins, I assure you," replied Mr. Baines blandly; "but if you will allow me to be seated, for my walk has been rather a long one, I will in a very few words explain the object of my visit."

Collins motioned to a chair, and the attorney presently proceeded.

"I have been retained, Mr. Collins, by Mrs. Atherton to conduct her son's defence."

The sudden start which his auditor could not suppress, and the stammering exclamation which followed it, did not escape the keen glance of the man of law.

"Yes; and it is with reference to that sad business that I am here."

"That you are here! Why, what have I to do with it?"

"Not much *as yet*," replied Mr. Baines, with a sort of suppressed emphasis on the last two words."

"What do you mean, Mr. Attorney?" demanded Collins, recovering from his surprise. "Explain your business, if you please, and be as brief as you can. I have no leisure for mere gossip."

"Neither have I. To come, then, to the point at once: you discharged from your employ on Monday last a labourer of the name of Carter—— What is there in the mention of that man's name to disturb you?"

"Nothing, nothing—go—go on. I was a good deal shocked by the late terrible occurrence, and am still somewhat nervous. But go on. What of Carter?"

"He was, as *you* know, a fellow of dissolute habits. It has been ascertained by Farmer Elliot that about seven o'clock on the evening of the murder he was seen hastening from this house. He has not been heard of since. It is possible, therefore—nay, it is highly probable—that he dressed himself in Mr.

Atherton's clothes whilst he was sleeping—in this very room, by the bye—and shot Amos Leveridge with a view, of course, to robbery; but which purpose, by the unexpected appearance of Simpson, and, I suppose, of yourself, was frustrated. My errand here is to ascertain if you can tell us what has become of him, or where it is *likely* we may meet with him?"

"How should I know? You do not, I hope, believe me capable of—of"——

"Concealing a knowledge of the real assassin? I would not willingly suspect any man of being an accessory after the fact to murder, as in the eye of the law he would in such a case be, and liable, upon conviction, to transportation for life"——

"What is the meaning of these inuendoes?" exclaimed Collins, starting up, and speaking with heat and passion. "How dare you address such words to me?"

"Mr. Collins"——

"Leave the house, sir! I know no more of Carter than I do of you, and care as little for him."

As the attorney, thus rudely dismissed, left the house, he muttered, "If Carter *is* the murderer, that fellow is his accomplice either before or after the fact. I scarcely know which." Upon further reflection, Mr. Baines resolved to keep his suspicions to himself, but at the same time to use every effort to discover Carter. With this view, as soon as he reached home, he sent advertisements to all the county, and several of the

London journals, and had a large number of placards printed and distributed, offering fifty pounds reward for information as to the whereabout of the missing man, whose person he minutely and accurately described.

The visit of Mr. Baines greatly disturbed Collins, boldly as he at last carried the matter off. The law had, he trembled to find, contemplated the crime of which he had rendered himself guilty, and visited it with the highest secondary penalty known to English justice. He was by no means so safe, then, from retribution as he had imagined himself to be. But detection, he still hugged himself to think, was impossible. The guilty secret rested with himself and the actual assassin. What human skill or cunning could wrest it from those dark hiding-places? He was but a fool to startle at such shadows. It was all too late to retrace the path on which he had entered, and he would walk boldly and undauntedly on, till the rich and beauteous prize for which he had rashly—oh, how rashly!—bartered the jewel of his peace was his beyond the reach of chance or fate.

He arose next morning feverish and unrefreshed. It was the day appointed for the funeral of Amos Leveridge; and, soon after rising from his untasted breakfast, he dressed himself with great care, and took his way towards Warwick Villa. On the return of the funeral procession from the grave, he requested Miss

Leveridge—whose pale loveliness, contrasted by her mourning-dress, looked, he thought, more enchantingly lustrous than ever—to favour him with a private interview. She complied; and he, in deferential, insinuating phrase, reminded her of the promise she had made her father on the evening of his decease, and begged to know if he was to regard himself in the light of her accepted suitor. The lady's manner was cold and somewhat disdainful as she replied, "That she did not forget, and did not intend to break her promise, though she thought it a rather unseemly time to remind her of it. It was, however, she begged especially to remind him, a *conditional* promise. She had seen Mrs. Atherton, and believed with her that, spite of appearances, Edmund Atherton was guiltless of the dreadful crime imputed to him, and that his innocence would yet be made manifest. Should it, however, unhappily prove otherwise," added Miss Leveridge, tears trembling in her eyes, "I will, at whatever sacrifice, should you be so cruel as to require it, fulfil the promise I so rashly gave." With this answer Collins was obliged to affect contentment, and he soon after left the house in a transport of suppressed but fiery rage.

"What devil's wages are these for which I have been working!" he exclaimed with fierce bitterness, as soon as he knew himself to be out of sight and hearing. "My peace of mind utterly wrecked—lost, gone, past hope, beyond recall!—the clear conscience which but a few days since might have defied a world to startle it,

now trembling at the merest shadow!—the fell serpents of remorse clinging round brain and heart, and goading me hourly with their hellish fangs well-nigh to madness! And all for what? To be scorned and mocked at by yon proud, beautiful minx—to be cheated, it should seem, of the prize for which I have so madly played! He will be acquitted, will he? The evidence, perchance, is not considered strong enough to insure a conviction! Well, it must be strengthened then! *I* will strengthen it; for, come what come may, I'll not be fooled, baffled, laughed at!"

As soon as he reached home, and had thrown himself into a chair, the servant handed him the county paper, which had just been brought in. He glanced vacantly over it till his eye rested upon the advertisement offering a reward of fifty pounds for the apprehension of Carter. Why, how was this?—what dreadful fatality was pursuing him? But a few hours since so securely havened, safe out of tempest's reach, and now helplessly drifting out to sea, with breakers, it should seem, on every side, and the fierce waves dashing at his feet and hissing in his ears! He threw the paper from him; and, as if seized with sudden sickness, asked the servant if there was any brandy in the house.

"Plenty: shall I bring it you?"

"Yes; and be quick."

The potent spirit quickly rallied his fainting energies. He continued to drink till a late hour; and for the

first time in his life William Collins retired to bed in a state of inebriation. The evil habit grew rapidly upon him. Alcohol—familiar fiend!—was ever ready at his summons to drown and blunt the suggestions of conscience—the fiery arrows of remorse. But the spirit demon demands high payment for such services; and the price he exacted was soon indelibly recorded on the shattered mental and bodily health of his votary and victim.

IV.

It was not till the following March assize that Edmund Atherton was "put upon his country." During the long interval that had elapsed since his committal, no material fact in connection with the death of Amos Leveridge had come to light, neither had any tidings been obtained of Carter, although the reward had been, by Mrs. Atherton's directions, doubled. As the day of trial drew near, the hopes of Mr. Baines of obtaining a favourable result, as well as the strong reliance of the prisoner's mother on the ultimate triumph of justice, even in earthly courts, visibly paled and drooped. What, indeed, but failure *could* be expected of a defence which had no other basis than a vague suspicion that another absent, unproducible person, was the real culprit?

A few minutes after the court doors were opened on the morning the trial was expected to come on, the whole of the space appropriated to the public was

densely packed with curious and anxious spectators. Mr. Justice Taunton was on the bench: I forget the name of the gentleman—one of the members of the outer bar—who appeared for the prosecution; the defence was intrusted to the late Sir William Follett, then but at the commencement of his brief but distinguished career, who had been specially retained, and brought down for this case. Sir William, then Mr. Follett, was perhaps the most effective cross-examiner that the English bar, unrivalled as it may be said to be in that science—it is nothing less—has ever produced. His management of the defence was admirable, and fully vindicated the judgment of Mr. Baines, who had selected him in preference to men of higher standing and larger experience. Beneath a quietude of manner which excited no suspicion, roused no watchfulness, there lurked a lynx-eyed vigilance, a quick sagacity, which detected and availed itself of the slightest point that could benefit his client. The case against the prisoner was, the reader need not be told, overwhelming; and yet so able were the cross-examinations of the witnesses—so suggestive, so to speak, of doubt and uncertainty—that the issue, till the judge's charge was delivered, seemed altogether problematical and unassured. I need not recapitulate the evidence: it was essentially the same as that given before the inquest, with the exception of the testimony of William Collins, whose appearance in the witness-box bore sad testimony to the swift moral and

physical ruin which an evil conscience and reckless indulgence in alcoholic stimulants can bring about. He was sprucely, showily dressed; but his once healthy, florid complexion had become pale and bloated; his eyes had that glazy, half-imbecile look which marks the habitual drinker; and his hand, as he received the Testament, to swear "to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," shook so violently, from the operation either of terror or of brandy, perhaps of both, that he could scarcely place it to his lips. Devil's wages indeed had he been earning, and very prompt and full had been the payment! He now swore positively that he had no doubt whatever—never had doubted, in fact, though he had previously hesitated to express his conviction—that the prisoner was the man he saw running in the direction of Holm Farm after the commission of the murder. The cross-examination of Collins fell, by some unfortunate chance, to the junior counsel for the defence, and was consequently nothing like so effective as if Mr. Follett had sifted him; still the result could scarcely have been different.

The prisoner's defence, which had been prepared for him by Mr. Baines—I feel confident counsel had not been consulted upon it—fell cold and dead upon the audience. It was acute and ingenious enough—too much so — and far too lawyer-like. Wire-drawn special pleading may be listened to with respect from a barrister's lips, but, when uttered by a prisoner, sounds

too much like guilt fencing with justice to be effective. From innocence in danger of a scaffold one expects to hear the accents of indignant denial—the free speech that bursts without a pause—the plain, round, unvarnished tale—rather than logical subtleties and legal dissertations upon the comparative value of direct and circumstantial evidence. The reading of the defence occupied about half an hour; and when it was concluded everybody felt that the prisoner's case had been damaged rather than helped by it. Witnesses to character were next called; and then Mr. Justice Taunton commenced his summing up. At every sentence he uttered in those low, husky, yet distinct tones, it seemed as if the prisoner's remaining sands of life passed visibly away before his breath. The terrible graphic skill with which he grouped, as it were, the evidence that had been given, and showed how one isolated fact threw light upon and gave significance to another fact, exhibited judicial acumen of the highest order. "The very able cross-examinations of the counsel for the defence, and the paper read by the prisoner, have suggested, with more or less acuteness and eloquence," remarked his lordship in conclusion, "that circumstantial evidence ought not to be relied upon. With that opinion I can by no means agree. A circumstance, gentlemen, cannot *lie*—cannot give corrupt and perjured testimony. The finding of the paper-wadding of the gun, for instance, in this case, close to the body of the murdered man, and the cor-

responding portion in the prisoner's pocket, is a circumstance which no ingenuity could forge—no false-swearer invent and palm upon us. I will only further remark, that if the story told by the prisoner, with a view to persuade you that some other person might have obtained, or in point of fact did obtain, temporary possession of his clothes and gun, with no other object, it should seem, than to get him involved in a capital charge; I say if that story is to be held of sufficient weight to beat down the testimony we have heard to-day, crime may stalk not only unpunished, but unquestioned through the land; no man's life would be safe; and our courts of justice, for any check they would be to evil-doers, might as well be closed at once. Gentlemen, you will now consider your verdict. The opinion I entertain I have freely expressed; but that opinion is not binding upon you. The law constitutes you sole judges of the facts placed before you. If you feel any reasonable doubt of the guilt of the prisoner, you will acquit him. The verdict, gentlemen, will be yours, not mine."

You might have heard a pin drop as the jury, after a few moments' consultation with each other, turned, without leaving the court, to say they were agreed.

"How say you?" said the clerk of the arraigns; "is the prisoner at the bar, whom you have had in charge, guilty of the offence for which he has been arraigned, or not guilty?"

"Guilty!"

"And so say you all; and that is your verdict?"

The profound stillness which followed the delivery of the verdict was broken by a noise and bustle towards the upper end of the court. The strong resolution which had sustained Mrs. Atherton up to this moment had given way at last: she had fainted, and was borne out of court in a state of insensibility.

Mr. Justice Taunton assumed the black cap, and in a very feeling, impressive address—he was affected even to tears—passed sentence of death upon the prisoner. He implored him to dismiss from his mind all vain hopes of mercy in this world, and to humble himself in prayer and penitence before the just and merciful God he had so grievously offended, by impiously breaking into the sanctuary of human life: and then the time which the law permitted a murderer to exist after his conviction, brief as it was, might prove amply sufficient, if diligently used, to obtain that mercy which the Eternal never denied to the humble and repentant suppliant. He then passed formal sentence in the usual manner.

The prisoner had stood erect, with folded arms, gazing with a fierce and angry expression in the judge's face during this address; and at its conclusion he exclaimed in stern, indignant tones—"I reject your sympathy, my lord: I fling back your pretended commiseration. If you, and those men who have so rashly judged and condemned me, could see yourselves as He whose name you so glibly invoke sees you, you would

know that it is *you* who have need to humble yourselves in prayer and penitence for impiously presuming to violate the sanctuary of human life! I go to death: you return to your homes, to linger out a few more winters of precarious life; but the God of heaven and earth alone knows who is the greatest object of pity—I, who am about to perish by an unmerited sentence, or you, who have unjustly doomed me!" —— He would have said more; but the gaoler, at a gesture from the judge, forcibly removed him from the dock; and the court adjourned.

As Mr. Baines passed out of court, a well-known Bow-street officer, or runner, as those celebrated persons were formerly designated, accosted him—"You are, I believe, the attorney of the prisoner who has just been tried and convicted?"

"Yes I am; and what of that?"

"Only that Carter, the man so often alluded to to-day, and for whose apprehension, I perceive by a printed placard, you have offered a hundred pounds reward, is the very fellow I am down here after for a burglary and homicide committed in London. We have traced him to this county, but unfortunately have somehow missed the trail. If you can afford me any hint of where he would be likely to run to cover, I may perhaps be able to serve you as well as myself."

"Come in—come in," cried Baines in great agitation. "This is my office. Come in: we may save him yet!"

V.

It was late when Collins arrived that evening at Holm Farm. The distance from Warwick was considerable, and he had remained drinking at the inn at which he put up for several hours after the court had closed. Fortunately for him, the mare he rode knew the road perfectly, and bore him swiftly and safely to his home. As was now his nightly wont, he ordered, the instant he was seated, brandy to be placed before him: fresh fuel was heaped upon the fire, and extra candles were placed upon the table, as if he hoped to dissipate, by physical light, the thick darkness which dwelt within him. He, as usual, drank deeply; but the spirit seemed to have lost its power to chase away the terrific images which flitted across his throbbing brain. "They will be sure to hang him," he murmured. "That solemn judge, who deems himself so wise, said there was no hope of mercy for him—no *mercy!* It seemed the arch-fiend's mock: no mercy for an innocent, just man; and impunity, riches, honour, to the perjurer and assassin! Excellent judge! And yet to string even a guilty man up like a dog is very horrible, much more—— Well, all men must die once; and then comes the long silence, never to be broken, as I have lately read, and must strive to believe; for if, perchance—— At all events I shall have abundance of time for repentance. The old man's

wealth will enable me to be charitable—munificent! Fanny, I doubt not, will marry me for her word's sake. Why, then, am I so utterly cast down—wretched—forlorn—miserable—bravely as I carry it before the world? Shall I ever again know tranquillity of mind?—again feel as I did previous to the day that thrice-accursed villain"——

These broodings of remorseful terror were interrupted by the loud and sharp accents of his woman-servant, evidently in remonstrance against the entrance of a person whose voice, feeble and broken as it was, Collins almost instantly recognised. "God of heaven!" he exclaimed, starting up, whilst his knees knocked against each other, and the blood rushed in tumultuous eddies through his veins—"God of heaven! it is his mother! Martha—Martha!" he shouted with desperate eagerness, "do not admit that—that person! I cannot—*will* not see her."

His orders were disregarded, or the servant found it impossible to comply with them; for the words had hardly passed his lips, when Mrs. Atherton, pale as marble, and, although—as was evident from the agonised expression of her eyes—suffering frightfully from compressed internal emotion, cold, calm, rigid as a statue of iron externally, stood before him. Collins fell back into his chair, nerveless, ghastly with overpowering terror—horror rather. He seemed confronted, as at doomsday, with the actual presence of his crime, incarnated there in that accusing glance—

that stony rigidity of aspect! The speechless confession of his attitude and demeanour was not lost upon his visitor, and an expression of pity gleamed over and softened the stern expression of her face.

"Unhappy, wretched young man!" said Mrs. Atherton—"infinitely more wretched and unhappy than he whom your devices have consigned to the scaffold! He is but in danger of those who can kill the body; but you of the eternal, and, it may be, the swift judgment"——

"To whom—to whom—dare—dare you speak thus?" gasped Collins, with white lips.

"To you, the wicked plotter against my son's life and honour!—to you, upon whose soul will rest the guilt of his innocent blood"——

"Woman, you rave!"

"I watched you, William Collins, as you gave that fearful testimony to-day, and knew—felt that you were perjuring yourself—that for some miserable, earthly deceit of wealth, or headstrong passion, you were madly bartering your immortal soul! Even now I can read upon those changed and haggard features, as in a book, the revelations of a despairing, tortured conscience"——

"I will not endure this!" exclaimed Collins, rising from his chair. "Martha!"

"I will not leave this house," said Mrs. Atherton with rising vehemence, and speaking hurriedly—"I will not leave this house till you have heard what I

came to say—till you have accepted or rejected a proposal in which, be assured, O sinful and miserable man! your own safety, both here and hereafter, is involved."

"What would you say? Be quick, and leave me."

"You know then—have known from the beginning—that Amos Leveridge was slain by your servant Carter."

"How!"

"You believe that, if my son should perish by the doom to which he has been sentenced, you will marry the old man's daughter, and possess his wealth. You deceive yourself. Not half an hour ago I parted from Fanny Leveridge, and she bade me tell you that she would rather die a thousand deaths than unite herself to the assassin of Edmund Atherton.

"Damnation!" shouted Collins, goaded beyond endurance. He seized Mrs. Atherton by the arms, and forced her violently towards the door—"Leave this place, or I shall do you a mischief."

"One word—one word," shrieked the unfortunate lady, vainly struggling in his grasp: "you had a mother once—one word only"—she slipped down, and clasped the knees of the excited, vengeful man. "This—this is what I would say. This murderer—this Carter—will be taken: of that there is no doubt. There is a hot pursuit after him, and he cannot escape. He will confess all: time enough, indeed, for your destruction, which, oh believe me, I desire not,

but that you should repent and live; but not time enough, I fear me, to save my son. Be you merciful to me—to yourself. Wealth you shall have. Fanny and I will joyfully provide for that, if you will but reveal the hiding-place of the murderer. *You* may escape, and happily yet atone for the evil you have contemplated, and, alas, well-nigh accomplished!"

Collins, confused with drink and the excitement of the interview, was for a moment staggered by a proposition which, however feasible it might appear to Mrs. Atherton, was, as regarded himself, both impracticable and absurd. A few moments' reflection sufficed to show him this, and he again fiercely desired Mrs. Atherton to leave the house. The unhappy mother clung in her despair to his knees in frantic supplication, imploring him with passionate intreaty to have compassion on her agony—her despair. In vain: he was inexorable, and, irritated by resistance, was about to use still more brutal violence than before to force Mrs. Atherton from his presence, when the parlour door flew open, and Mr. Baines, flushed, and panting with hurry and excitement, rushed into the room.

"Mrs. Atherton!" he exclaimed, "I have been seeking you everywhere. Thank God I have found you at last. Come with me. There is yet, my dear madam, be assured, hope for the innocent, and," he glared sternly at Collins as he spoke, "retribution for the guilty. Come!"

They immediately departed, leaving Collins sobered

somewhat by the scene through which he had passed, but racked with keener apprehension, enveloped in still gloomier doubts and fears, than before Mrs. Atherton's arrival. He was a blind man groping his way along the brinks of strange precipices, down which the next instant might see him hurled. He strove to collect, to marshal his thoughts; but his brain was in a whirl, his mind a chaos of conflicting passions, doubts, and fears. "What could the attorney mean by his hints of retributive justice?—An idle or a serious menace? Carter had not been taken, that was quite clear from that woman's proposal. What, then, had he to—— Fanny, too, it should seem, would not fulfil her promise. Curses on her!—on them all!—on himself, for the veriest dolt and idiot that ever trod the earth!—And that thrice-double villain Carter!"

A slight noise at the casement attracted his attention. He glanced sharply round; and, as if answering to his old master's summons, the face of Carter, unshaven, haggard, stamped with the ineffaceable impress of habitual guilt and fear, glared in ghastly pallor at him from the narrow opened window.

"Hell-dog!" vociferated Collins, starting up with ungovernable fury, and looking eagerly about, as if for a weapon with which to inflict summary vengeance on the wretched being whom he, with self-excusing sophistry, regarded as his destroyer—"hell-dog! what do you seek here?"

"Help, food, concealment, money!" replied Carter with a derisive chuckle. "Not for my sake only, master, but your own. I am pursued. Help me in, or it will be worse for you as well as me."

"Curse you!" shouted Collins, as the frightful peril to himself this sudden reappearance of the assassin involved flashed upon him; "you were born for my destruction."

"Not if you are wise, and, above all, *quick*," replied the hardened ruffian. "If you are not, master, blame yourself, for I will not go *alone* to gaol!"

A shout as of renewed and eager pursuit was heard at some distance from the house. "Quick, quick—lend me a hand; they are close upon me!"

Stunned, overwhelmed as he was by the sudden apparition of the only person whose presence he dreaded, Collins soon instinctively felt that it was essential to present safety to shield the ruffian from capture; and he mechanically, as it were, laid hold of him, and with some difficulty pulled him in at the window, which, being about the height of a tall man's shoulders from the ground, could with difficulty be scaled even by a vigorous person from the outside; and Carter, when hauled in, was feeble and nerveless from exhaustion and fatigue.

"Close the window-shutter; quick — quick!" he exclaimed. "And now, master," added Carter, after tossing off a couple of glasses of brandy, to which he unceremoniously helped himself, "I will crawl into

the cellar. They will call and ask if I am here, I daresay. You will know what answer to make. Once before, you know," added the assassin with a diabolical leer, "you forgot that you had seen me!"

For upwards of a quarter of an hour Collins sat in silent stupefaction, undisturbed by the dreaded visitors. At length his straining ear caught the sound of knocking at the outer door, and a minute afterwards the woman-servant announced that a man, calling himself a London police-officer, demanded admittance.

Her master made a gesture of assent: he could not for the moment speak, and he shook with terror in every limb.

The officer, a thick-set, short, resolute-looking man, an associate of him who had accosted Baines in Warwick, but whom he had not seen since the previous day, entered the room, and briefly stated his business. He had tracked a burglar and assassin, for whose apprehension a large reward was offered, to within about half a mile of that house, where he had suddenly lost all trace of him. Had he, Mr. Collins, seen or heard of him? "The man's name is Carter," added the Bow-street official, "and he was, I understand, at one time in your employ."

Collins with difficulty found words to reply that he had seen no one: and the officer, though with an unsatisfied air and manner, after asking a few other unimportant questions, left the house muttering as he

went out that he would have the scoundrel yet, alive or dead.

The officer had no sooner slowly retired than a wild and desperate thought glanced through Collins's bewildered, chaotic brain. "Why not save himself by at once sacrificing Carter? What hindered him from now delivering the insolent miscreant up to justice, and thus secure himself against the swift ruin he felt was enclosing him on all sides? How was it he had not thought of that before?" And in the insane impulse of the moment he jumped up and rushed out of the house, calling vehemently upon the officer to return. The Bow-street official had got to some distance from the place, but, on hearing himself called, turned swiftly back, and in two or three moments was again by the side of the master of the house. That interval of time, short as it was, had sufficed to bring back the shattered intellect of Collins to a sense of his real position, by recalling that day's perjury and the wall it had built up behind him, forbidding the possibility of a return to peace, to safety. "Too late," he groaned in utter agony of spirit—"too late!"

"Too late?" exclaimed the officer, misinterpreting his words. "Have you seen him then?"

"I thought I did," rejoined Collins, recovering himself, "yonder round by the bridge; but he must now be safe in the forest!"

"I'll try for him at all events," rejoined the officer,

as he went rapidly off in the indicated direction. Collins slowly and moodily returned to his sitting-room.

The house was soon afterwards closed for the night; the servant retired to bed; and Collins, thoroughly sobered by excessive fright, betook himself to the cellar, to confer with his repulsive and sinister guest. The interview was a long and angry one; but finally, yielding to the terrible necessities of the position in which he was placed, Collins agreed to furnish the ruffian with clothes, and a sufficient sum of money to defray his passage to America, whither the hunted felon promised to proceed immediately. It was arranged that he should leave his concealment the following night, and he expressed himself confident that, in "the disguise of a gentleman," as he termed it, he could venture on the journey without a chance of being recognised. He was then plentifully supplied with food and drink, and left to himself.

Collins did not stir out of his house during the whole of the next day, which, joyfully and unexpectedly to him, passed over without any further search or inquiry being made. Eleven o'clock, the hour agreed upon for Carter's departure, at length arrived; and the fellow, attired in a handsome suit of clothes and top-coat, of which the upturned collar, aided by an ample shawl neckerchief, effectually concealed the lower part of his face, and with thirty sovereigns in his pocket, prepared to issue forth. The servant had been sent

about half an hour before to Enfield on some pretendedly-urgent errand, and was not expected home for a considerable time. It was a bright moonlight night; but that, in the opinion of the two accomplices, did not greatly signify, as neither of them had the slightest suspicion that the house was watched, and Carter's disguise was, they both agreed, complete.

As Carter swiftly and cautiously emerged upon the road leading by Enfield, any one who had been on the other side of the thick belt of trees and shrubs to the left of Holm Farm, looking towards the village, might have observed a man, who had been watching the front of Collins's house for several hours, walk swiftly off at an angle that would enable him to cross the fugitive's path at the distance of something more perhaps than half a mile, without the necessity or risk of showing himself till within a few yards of his prey. If sufficiently near, he might also have seen the officer take a pistol from his pocket, and have heard him say, under his breath, "We have him now, a living man or a corpse at any rate, swift as he is said to be of foot."

Collins watched from the casement looking upon the road with intense anxiety. A quarter of an hour had passed away, when a loud shout struck upon his ear. He listened with breathless eagerness, but the sound was not repeated. He began to hope again, when a pistol-shot—another—a third—broke in quick succession on the silence of the night. Collins readily divining the cause of the shots—for Carter had insisted on hav-

ing his pistols—reeled, as if struck by a mortal blow, into the inner room, and sank, prostrated, helpless, upon the couch.

The unhappy man was roused from his trance of terror about an hour afterwards by the servant, who rushed into the apartment in a state of frantic excitement.

"Master! master!" she shouted, shaking at the same time the bewildered man rudely by the collar, "rouse yourself, for the love of Heaven, or you will be taken! Carter has been captured, and has confessed everything. The officers are up at Squire Dixon's to get a warrant for you. Farmer Elliot told me of it—for your father's sake, he said—and bade me warn you that not a moment must be lost."

The extremity of his danger seemed to reanimate the fainting energies of the unhappy man. He sprang up, muttered a hoarse curse, hastily unlocked a bureau that stood in the room, took out a considerable sum of money, and then, seizing his hat, turned as if about to go forth by the front door. "Master! master!" screamed the woman, "Not that way! Look, the officers are coming down the road! Here, by the back window; quick—quick! Now, round by the back of the trees, Farmer Elliot said, across the bridge, and strangers will never catch ye!"

Collins comprehended that the expedient suggested

was the only one that promised a chance of success, and he went off rapidly in the direction pointed out. It was some minutes before his departure from the house was noticed, sharp as were the numerous eyes which watched it. At length a shout, which seemed to be taken up and echoed on all sides of him, announced that his flight was discovered, and speed, he was instantly aware, afforded the only hope of escape left to him. He had been an expert runner before the demon of intemperance had enfeebled his frame; and even now, nerved by terror, the pace at which he ran soon distanced his pursuers. The bridge was in sight, and eagerly did he strain to reach and pass it ere his strength should fail him. Once within the tangled brakes of yonder forest, he might, for at least a few hours, defy pursuit and capture. The bridge was gained, the crisis of his danger seemed past, and his exulting spirit vented itself in a broken shout of derisive triumph, when three men, one of whom he instantly recognised as the officer who had visited his house on the previous evening, emerged suddenly from the opposite wood, and occupied the further end of the bridge. That avenue of escape had not, then, escaped the vigilance of his enemies! The shout of defiance died on his lips; and he stood rooted by despair upon the bridge he had with such fierce effort gained. At bay at last: hemmed in on all sides—no chance—no hope of escape! Philosophers tell us that in an instant of what men call time there may gleam forth in vivid

distinctness, from the scribbled palimpsest of the brain, all the thoughts, the acts, the images that life in its longest course may have traced upon it. If this, as I believe, be true, fancy what years of memory must have flashed upon the wretched being, gazing there in the brilliant moonlight upon the glorious creation stretched out before him—the green, flower-starred earth—the waving trees—the shining river—amidst which he had been born and nurtured, where he had carolled forth in boyhood, had exulted in youth, had loved in lusty manhood; and all now in vain beautiful for him! What was left to him from the huge wreck of his life? A blasted name—a future of exile and slavery—whilst his rival exulted triumphant in fortune and in love! . . . A wild yell of mingled rage, hatred, and despair burst from him; and, springing from the bridge into the deep and rapid river, the unhappy suicide rushed in his madness from the presence of man into that of God.

The body was next day sought for, found, and, by the tacit permission of the charitable vicar, quietly and privately buried in consecrated ground. A plain head-stone marks the spot, on which is engraved—

WILLIAM COLLINS, AGED 26 YEARS: DROWNED APRIL 7, 18—

VI.

Need I prolong this history? A few sentences will at all events suffice for what remains to be told. The deposition of Carter, who expired a few hours after it

was made, sufficed to convince Mr. Justice Taunton that for once at least in his life his analytical acumen had misled him. "It will be an ever-present lesson to me," said the well-intentioned judge, "as long as I exist." That these were not mere words of course, those who remember the issue of a locally-celebrated trial in the north, afterwards presided over by Mr. Justice Taunton, in which scrupulosity with respect to circumstantial evidence was pushed by the conscientious judge to so great an extreme as, in the opinion of many persons, to permit the escape from justice of a daring criminal, will readily agree: so prone is the most evenly-balanced mind to run into extremes! Edmund Atherton, before many days had passed, was restored to his home; and, folded in the arms of his excellent, gentle-hearted mother, felt a joy which only those who have been exposed to mortal peril can ever know. He was, if not a sadder, a wiser man; and, like all men of constant minds, could in very truth exclaim, "Sweet are the uses of adversity!"

It was something more than a year after these events, when Edmund Atherton and Fanny Leveridge were united in the bands of wedlock in Enfield parish church. The landscape, as the wedding-party issued from the sacred edifice, where the nuptial blessing, constituting the happy lovers man and wife, had been pronounced, laughed and sparkled in the smiles and sunshine of a golden morn of May. The incense of the

flowers—the forest's quiet hymn—the glad voices of the rejoicing river—ascended in one harmonious canticle of praise to the Giver of all good. Nature kept holiday, and shed "selectest influence" upon the loving hearts which beat in grateful unison with her universal psalm of joy. Few persons perhaps of the gay train cared at that moment to believe that sin and sorrow could exist in so fair, so beautiful a world; and only one—the writer of these pages—heard, as the bridal procession swept in its pride past an obscure, unhonoured grave, the low-toned ejaculation of the exultant bridegroom's mother, "Poor Collins!" followed by the murmured prayer, "Lord, lead us not into temptation!"

The Romance of Common Life.

No. 4.—WHICH IS WHICH?

I was commissioned by an eminent London firm, in the autumn of 1833, to proceed to the south-west of Spain, for the purpose of establishing a commercial agency in connection with the cultivators and others who occupy the rich lands to the east and south of the Guadalquivir, and skirted by the waters of the Bay of Cadiz. During my unexpectedly prolonged stay there, I became—in consequence of a rather close intimacy with Senor Manuel, a principal merchant of that city, to whom I had been accredited—involved in a singular affair, the chief incidents of which I have thrown together in the following brief, unexaggerated narrative.

I was breakfasting one Sunday morning with Senor

Manuel and his son Alfonso, a young man of frank and agreeable character and manners, at the merchant's country residence, about a couple of degrees inland from Cadiz, when the senor, who had been unusually silent and preoccupied, suddenly proposed that, in furtherance of the commission with which I was intrusted, I should pay a visit to Juan Alvarez, a vine-grower near San Lucar de Barrameda, a small town by the entrance of the Guadalquivir.

"I promised Alvarez yesterday," said Senor Manuel, speaking slowly, while a grave smile played about his lips, excited apparently by the red flush which lit up the clear olive of his son's complexion, "that I would call on him shortly. I am disposed to do so to-morrow, if that will suit your convenience."

"It would," I said, "very well."

"Then, Alfonso," continued the merchant, "you will have three horses ready saddled by daybreak, unless you decline accompanying us; in which case, two will of course suffice."

A gay laugh from the son as he rose, bowed, and left the apartment, was a sufficient reply. As soon as his shadow disappeared from the open corridor, Senor Manuel said, in a confidential sort of a way: "The boy has fallen in love, but not so stupidly as I at first supposed." As the merchant spoke, his glance reverted complacently to a recent number of *El Crónica de Cadiz,* which had previously, I noticed, engaged his attention in a remarkable manner. "Nothing like so

stupidly as I had supposed—certainly not. And after all," continued the thoroughly worldly, matter-of-fact trader, as he withdrew his gaze with some effort from the paper, relaxed into a candidly benevolent smile, and, early as it was, kindled a cigar at a spirit-lamp upon the table—" after all, love is the great passion, the irresistible sentiment, the sublime enthusiasm, the —the everything, in short, in this sunny, superb Spain of ours at least. In your cold, foggy island, Senor Inglese, it may be different; and yet," added the merchant with prompt liberality, lest doubtless his reputation for politeness should suffer in my estimation, "I have heard there are handsome women in England."

"Well, a few—one or two, here and there, in the larger towns and counties perhaps."

"Ha! Still it is well; one must be content. Everybody cannot have the luck to be Spaniards; but to-morrow, my friend, you shall see a Dulcinea that might turn all mankind into Quixotes. By San Jago! there is not such a pair of eyes in all Spain as Dona Katerina's!"

"*Dona* Katerina! A lady of degree, it seems?"

"No, no," laughed Senor Manuel, as he rose and carefully pocketed *El Crónica;* "that is only a complimentary way of speaking, you understand. But you shall know all about it to-morrow, the more readily, my friend, that I wish to take your opinion on the subject. But mind and be here early, as there is a long journey before us. *A Dios!*"

It was subsequently deposed that, in the afternoon of this same day (September 26, 1833), one of the numerous groups of busy politicians lounging about the Puerta del Sol, Madrid, and eagerly discussing the recent palace revolution consequent upon the resuscitation of the king, after he had been officially pronounced defunct by the royal physicians, was hastily approached by a middle-aged man, very shabbily attired, and further remarkable for a shy, slouching, though half-military air and bearing. He abruptly addressed himself to Senor Perez, a wealthy money-broker of Madrid, who appeared to feel anything but honoured by the stranger's preferential notice.

"You have not heard the news, it seems?" said the new-comer as he dragged the reluctant Perez away by the arm.

"Not heard the news!" sourly responded the money-merchant, vainly striving to disengage himself from the stranger's familiarly forcible grasp. "A likely supposition, truly! All Madrid has heard the news—all at least, Senor Antonio de Gonsalvo, that dare show themselves where a journal is read, or men talk openly with each other."

"Calomarde has really fallen then!" said the person thus addressed, and still urging Perez slowly onwards. "Come, tell me all about it."

"Of course Calomarde has fallen, and very deservedly too, for the deception he attempted in the interest of Don Carlos to palm off upon the dying

king. Zea Bermudez has been sent for by Christina, who in a few days—for Ferdinand cannot recover—will be queen-regent of Spain."

"Malediction!" growled the stranger fiercely; "I feared so!"

"Antonio de Gonsalvo," sternly exclaimed Perez, a man of thoroughly respectable, well-to-do politics, to whom no heresy was so detestable as that which refused obeisance to the rising sun—"you are surely crazed!"

"Pardon! My words had no meaning. See, this is the news I doubted you had heard of."

Senor Perez took the letter offered him, adjusted his glasses, and it was delightful to note the benignant graciousness which gradually overspread his previously forbidding aspect. Scarcely permitting himself to read to the conclusion, he hurriedly exclaimed: "Dead! and so suddenly? Why, then, my dear De Gonsalvo, you are your ucle's heir!"

"Unquestionably so; but," he added, with a half-ashamed glance at his threadbare raiment, "it is not in this guise I should appear at Castello."

"Certainly not. You want money, and shall have it. Come with me; yet stay: was there not some talk, many years ago, of the marriage of that rebellious slip of a son, Enrique de Gonsalvo?"

"Yes; he married Constancia, an eldest sister of Inez de Calderon, Queen Christina's present favourite lady of the palace; but he left no issue."

"No issue, male or female? I remember now to have heard so. And, since they are both long ago with the saints, you, senor, are the undoubted heir. Bravissimo! Come with me, excellent sir: I will furnish you with any sums you require. And, Santa Maria! who would *not* lend anything he required to a nobleman with the best blood of Valencia in his veins? Come!"

A note to this freely rendered excerpt from the judicial archives of Sevilla adds, that the deponent, Josè Perez, further recalls to mind, upon reflection, that, later in the day, when the precited conversation took place, Antonio de Gonsalvo suddenly asked him if he knew how far it was from Madrid to San Lucar de Barrameda, in Andalucia; to which he, Josè Perez, replied, that he had never heard of such a place, as indeed he never had till within these last few days.

I was punctual to the time agreed upon with Senor Manuel; and, both father and son being in readiness, we mounted forthwith, and set off at a canter. The weather was delicious, the horses excellent, the roads nowhere impassable, and, as we gaily caracoled along, I became more and more satisfied, from the merchant's thickening hints, that, for all the inflated rubbish he had indulged in about love and romance, the charms by which Katerina, whoever she might be, had won his consent to her union with his son, were of a sufficiently tangible and solid kind to be plainly set forth and summed up in his ledger. Especially after we

paused for rest and refreshment, and had imbibed a pint or so of excellent Xeres wine, did his confidences flow freely forth, all suggestive of mounting fortune, vastly increased commerce, and high social distinction, interspersed with rough but keen guesses at the value of the vine and olive grounds we were passing, and incessant injunctions to secrecy and silence. However, it was a very agreeable ride, and we reached our destination in excellent time, preceded about an hour by Alfonso, whose impatience, as we neared the goal, could not brook our more sober pace.

The dwelling and grounds of Juan Alvarez were very pleasantly situated at a considerable distance in our favour from San Lucar and the Guadalquivir, but commanding a fine view of both, as well as of the broad Atlantic, whose surging murmurs, brought by the odorous south wind, struck faintly and soothingly upon an attentively listening ear. In the season of buds and flowers, the place must have been as fresh, blooming, and fragrant, as the two charming girls who, with Juan Alvarez, met us at the myrtle-trellised gate. Let me here describe these youthful maidens—neither was yet eighteen—as I might have done a few hours after making their acquaintance. Luisa, slightly the taller, and considerably the fairer, was the daughter and only child of Alvarez, whom she, however, did not in the slightest manner resemble: not so much as her companion Katerina, who did so in some slightly appreciable degree, though, truly, it would have

puzzled one to say in what particular feature; and *she* was no relative of his, nor indeed of any other tangible person, and known simply as Katerina. Juan Alvarez, to be sure, had always given out that she was the stray scion of an illustrious family of the old Gothic blood of Spain, consigned to his care under painful circumstances for awhile, but certain to be ultimately claimed and restored to her rightful position with prodigious *éclat* and rejoicings. This was a kind of story that would never, under any circumstances, have gone down very well with me; and, in the present instance, the Gothic blood and parentage part of the romance was quite evidently a fiction. If ever there was a damsel of the genuine Andalucian race, Katerina was one. This her hair, complexion, glancing Arab eye, agile, slight, yet warmly rounded figure, quick, gushing susceptibility of temperament, and keen, eager enjoyment of life, unmistakeably proclaimed. Luisa now, judging from appearances, might have had a smart sprinkling of Gothic blood in her veins. She was fairer than Katerina; her hair, especially, was many shades lighter than the glossy ebony of Katerina's long plaited tresses; and her feet, though well formed enough, and by no means excessively large, were of nothing like such delicate symmetry as her companion's. Then her speech and manner, compared with the half-Moorish maiden's, were unimaginative, cold, and formal. Luisa, in brief, although, it might be, a handsomer person in a strict sense, was certainly not a more loveable

one than Katerina, whose charming face showed as many dimples as there were letters in her baptismal name. Good, well-principled girls both of them withal were, and ardently attached to each other—in fact, but for complexions of a deeper glow, and a certain foreign colouring of tone and demeanour, just such gentle, graceful, heart-breaking damsels as lead captive the ingenuous youth of Britain, both north and south of the Tweed. Education, it is true, in a conventional sense, they possessed but little, except in the arts of reading, writing, spelling, and sewing—acquired, I believe, at a nun's school, attached to the not very distant convent-church of Los Gozos de Neustra Senora (the Joys of Our Lady); yet were they superior artists in two at least of the accomplishments that attract and fascinate mankind. But then dancing in Spain, in Andalucia at all events, positively *does* come by nature; and first-class scholars were they both, each after her distinctive bent of mind, in that primal academy. Music was also theirs by special gift of Heaven; for certainly they had no teacher in the science, if you except the organ-swell of the wind, and torrent-voices sweeping down from the forest-clothed sierras in the not far distance, which might, perhaps, have given resonance and power to Luisa's rich and ringing tones in the heroic chants celebrative of the exploits of El Cid Campeador; and that you also ignore, as a preceptive influence, the murmured melody of the Guadalquivir, stealing its bright way

through perfume-breathing cistus and myrtle groves, of which even a dull ear might detect a silver echo in Katerina's *Romances Moriscos.*

But I must have done with this damsel-drawing, or I shall get carried off my feet into altitudes for which I have no wings—they went with my black hair and whiskers—and I turn, therefore, to Senor Juan Alvarez, a lithe, sinewy, black-eyed, black-haired, sallow, shrewd-faced individual of middle age, of neither repulsive nor prepossessing aspect and manners, according to my taste and impression. I was, moreover, very soon satisfied, as we strolled through his old-world cultivated vine and olive fields, that he possessed neither more nor less of aptitude for business than the generality of his leisure-loving countrymen, albeit there would a glimmer now and then shoot forth from his deep-set, cavernous, flurried eyes, which convinced me that he was by no means indifferent in the matter of profit, if obtainable without much personal effort. One thing I rather liked him for: he was evidently strongly attached to the orphan intrusted to his guardianship, and tenderly solicitous for her—Katerina's—welfare. This, admitting the story told of her family to be true, and that he had been a hereditary servitor of the decayed house, as in that case I supposed it to be, was no doubt attributable to the strong feudal sentiment still prevalent in Spain. Alvarez, certainly, in my judgment, loved her far better than he did his own child, and was at pains, one

could see, to conceal the preference he felt, lest it might give Luisa pain. But to resume this narrative: I found Alvarez to be in so unbusiness-like a mood, so impatiently indifferent to my instructions and explanations relative to an improved mode of preparing and packing olives for the London market, that I was at length fain to conclude that his mind was, for the present at all events, hopelessly preoccupied with the Alfonso and Katerina marriage affair (which I knew from Senor Manuel he was extremely anxious to forward and hasten), to the exclusion of more important matters. I was right. Clearly discerning the uselessness of further business discourse, I proposed returning to the house; and we had no sooner done so than the young people, with that singularly intuitive perception—common, I have observed, to all countries—by which, without a word being spoken, they become aware that certain interesting arrangements will be best furthered by their absence, stole quietly off, and I was doing the same, when Senor Manuel caught me by the arm, and said: "I beg you will not leave us. You English, who, I have read, buy and sell your wives at market with halters round their necks—no offence, I hope; every country has its customs, and why not, by San Jago! Still, you must be cool hands at such bargains; and I shall be glad of your advice and assistance in a rather out-of-the-way affair of the kind. My friend Alvarez will, I am sure, have no objection."

The quick, furtive glance of "my friend Alvarez" said: "Every objection" quite plainly; but, as his lips said: "None in the world," I reseated myself, lit a cigar, and assumed a listening attitude.

"You see," began the merchant with some hesitation, as if hardly knowing at which end of the story to commence—"you see—that is, you will presently—that Katerina is not Katerina at all, but Constancia de Gonsalvo"——

"Dona Constancia de Gonsalvo," interposed Juan Alvarez.

"Yes, yes, of course. Dona Constancia de Gonsalvo, whose honoured parents both died about fifteen years ago—one of grief, the other of gunpowder."

"Enrique de Gonsalvo," said Alvarez with dignity, "colonel of cavalry in the forces of the heroic General Vidal, blew himself up rather than surrender to the troops sent against him by Ferdinand, who had dismissed the constitutional Cortes"——

"Yes, yes; we know all about that," interrupted Manuel, who, unlike the majority of his class, was an Absolutist. "He was a rebel against our lord the king, a setter-up of revolutions"——

"Of constitutions," again interposed Alvarez. "The English senor understands, no doubt."

"Santa Maria, to be sure he does! It would be odd if he did not, seeing they all come from his country! But, revolutions or constitutions, the end is, that Colonel de Gonsalvo was a dead traitor, his wife and child proscribed outlaws"——

"No, no—disinherited outcasts, you mean."

"Tell the story yourself, friend Juan; you will do it better than I shall. By San Jago! my head always spins round like a humming-top when I think of a sensible man risking his for such nonsense."

Juan Alvarez did so, but with so much circumlocution, that I had better perhaps relate its substance in my own words. Colonel de Gonsalvo, the only son of Don Lopez de Gonsalvo, a fanatical royalist, he himself being an equally fanatical Exaltado, perished in Vidal's outbreak against the government of Ferdinand, having about two years previously espoused, against the wishes of the families on both sides, Constancia de Calderon. Her husband's death preyed fatally upon the youthful widow, who, when dying, intrusted her only child, a girl then nearly three years old, to Juan Alvarez, an attached servant of the Calderon family, with strict injunctions to keep its very existence a secret from Don Lopez, the grandfather, who, if he married again and had a son, would thereby nullify the otherwise indefeasible claim of the female heir to the Gonsalvo estates. This was done in the presence of a clergyman, one Juan Ortiz, since created a bishop, who had also at the same time witnessed and attested by his seal and signature a document drawn up in accordance with the dying wife's instructions, containing her wishes with respect to the future of the child, and a minute description of its person. About two years after this, Juan Alvarez,

who was already a widower with a child of his own, of the same sex and age as that of his mistress—though it did not clearly appear to me that this fact was known to the mother of Constancia—came and settled in his present abode.

"The rest, which is plain sense," said Senor Manuel, when we had got thus far, "is soon told. My son Alfonso, like a silly calf, as he and most young men are, chose to fall in love with, for aught he knew to the contrary, a moneyless, nameless Katerina. Parental watchfulness took the alarm, and I naturally insisted that the acquaintance should be broken off. What happened next? Why this: my friend Juan, very anxious, as he ought to be, to settle this charge handsomely in the world; for, after all, the Gonsalvo estates, which are terribly dipped too, I hear, are not hers yet—perhaps never will be, God knows; there is nothing sure in this world: well, I say, my friend Juan, considering these things, comes to me and tells this story; which I of course—for one must look at both sides of the cloth before buying—take time to consider. There is Don Lopez, I reflect, still in the prime of life"——

"Sixty-four, if he's a day," interrupted Alvarez.

"You hear: a man scarcely ageing, and who may live, as I say, thirty or forty years longer. Then there is a varlet of a nephew, who knows, or at least suspects, that the heiress to the Gonsalvo estates is under the care of my friend Juan, and he may give trouble."

"He lost his commission of captain of artillery, as I told you, whilst serving at Ceuta, for misconduct, more than a year agone. Besides, he will have no right in the matter whatever, and is not worth a real."

"Well, be it as it may, I have made up my mind to brave all chances, in consideration of Katerina's charming qualities, and Alfonso's ardent attachment to her, provided that you, Juan Alvarez, furnish me with instant and incontestable proof that the amiable girl is in very truth Dona Constancia de Gonsalvo, and heiress-presumptive of the estates—admitting, at the same time, as I unhesitatingly and unreservedly do—that she is a nobility and a fortune in herself. If you do this, Juan, it is my wish that the marriage be celebrated without delay."

"The proof is easy and conclusive," said Alvarez, as he unlocked an iron-bound box which he had placed upon the table. "But, first, have you written to Father Ortiz—the bishop, that is to say?"

"Yes, and I have his letter in reply with me. He perfectly remembers the death of the Lady Constancia, and witnessing the document you speak of, although he can remember only its general tenor. This, however, by reason, as you shall presently hear, of the venerable man's praiseworthy precaution at the time of signing, can have no evil consequence whatever."

"Is this like the signature in the letter?" said Alvarez, placing his finger upon a name at the bottom of a parchment he had unrolled.

"My eyes are not so good as they were. Have the goodness to compare the two signatures," said Senor Manuel, placing the letter in my hands. "Not that there is any doubt, my good friend Juan," he added, whilst I heedfully compared the two signatures, "of your truth and honesty. Very far from that; but all matters of form, no one is better aware than you, should be gone through with minutely and formally."

"The signatures," I said, "which are very peculiar, are identical. There can, I think, be no doubt of that."

"And there are no erasures, no blots, no alterations, Senor Inglese!"

"None whatever."

"Then have the goodness, my dear sir, to read the document aloud."

I did so The first part related to some testamentary dispositions regarding the child; then came a list of some family ornaments. "Here they are," said Alvarez, taking them out of the box and placing them on the table. They precisely corresponded with the inventory. The next and important lines, in my view of the matter, described the child's person minutely: "Brunette complexion, black eyes and hair, and long eyelashes; small feet, one pockmark over the right eyebrow, and two moles about an inch apart at the back of the neck." Katerina, unquestionably! There could be no question upon the matter. She was a Goth, then, by descent! So much for my conceit in ethnological science.

"Capital!" exclaimed the merchant—"Katerina's exact portrait. The moles I saw half an hour since. Still, friend Juan, your document might be a forgery; nay, don't look so fierce, man: it *might*, I say, be a clever imitation of the original instrument, altered only in a material part—the description of the child, for instance."

"Senor Manuel," said Alvarez faintly, "what, what can you mean?" The man's countenance was as white as a tombstone, either with consternation or anger, I could not for the moment decide which. Presently, I felt assured that it could have been from anger only.

"I say," resumed Manuel, "that such a charge, but for the forethought of the excellent bishop, might have been insinuated, especially by that scamp of a nephew, Antonio de Gonsalvo. But that will be hereafter impossible if you agree—and I am sure you will readily—to submit the parchment to another test."

"Test! What test?" murmured Juan Alvarez, still white, trembling, nerveless, as it seemed.

"The bishop says in his letter," replied Senor Manuel, "that, being strongly impressed with the importance of the document he was witnessing, and having no time to copy it, he took a penknife and cut off in a zigzag direction a strip of blank parchment about two inches wide, right across the top of the instrument, and just above where the writing commenced. He has preserved that strip. Now, if this your sheet or skin of parchment—which we see *is* cut zigzag

(indented the lawyers call it) across the top—fits that in his lordship's possession, as well as matches it in grain, there cannot be the shadow of the shade of a doubt that we are in possession of the original *bonâ fide* document. Eh! friend Juan, is not that so?"

The man was breathing freely again, and the natural colour had returned to his cheeks. "Certainly, certainly," he said: "the device was excellent, admirable. I remember, now it is mentioned, observing his lordship act as you describe, but without at the time comprehending the motive of what he was doing. The test can be applied as soon as you please."

"Bravo, my friend! I knew you would say so. Thus, then, let it be: the bishop happens to be at Sevilla just now. Let the document be sent there, officially, for registration at the Chancellaria, which, I am advised, is in all cases the proper course: his lordship will then have an opportunity of verifying it. In the meantime, for I now throw all doubt and hesitation to the winds, let us have the marriage-contract drawn up, and signed and sealed without delay, according to the terms you proposed, and I cheerfully agree to."

Juan Alvarez joyfully assented; and now, all obstacles smoothed away, all doubts removed, Senor Manuel's self and cigar kindled into unwonted irradiation, as, emitting an extraordinary cloud of smoke, and gallantly grasping a flask of wine, he exclaimed: "Here's to the health of the bride, gentlemen! of the charming Katerina, the divine Constancia, the most

beautiful maiden in all Spain; as I told you only yesterday, Senor Inglese. I should be proud of such a daughter-in-law, if she were as poor as a poet. Still, a handsome dowry does not come amiss. I shall give the sweet damsel a father's blessing directly she comes in. Her health, gentlemen!"

As she did come in very soon afterwards—and I have no taste either for fatherly or loverly raptures on such occasions—I slipped out, just to take a turn or two, and ask myself a few questions. What could be the true meaning of that which I had just seen and heard? That both Alvarez and Manuel were playing a part more or less deceitful, I had not the slightest doubt; and, as to the latter, I guessed pretty well where *his* secret lay. *El Crónica de Cadiz* had informed him of the death of Don Lopez de Gonsalvo; and, having thoroughly satisfied himself that Katerina was the true Constancia, he was desirous of hurrying on the match before the news reached Alvarez, and induced him either to insist upon more onerous conditions, or possibly to break off the negotiation altogether. This I mentally booked as certain, with regard to Senor Manuel. But Alvarez puzzled me. My first vague impression had been, that he was endeavouring to palm off his own daughter upon the wealthy merchant as the Lady Constancia de Gonsalvo, under which hypothesis his conduct was intelligible, and might arise from a natural anxiety to provide handsomely for Katerina, in case the Gonsalvo house

of cards fell to pieces. Yet the document I had seen, if verified by the attesting bishop—and, from the confidence exhibited by Alvarez, I had no doubt that it could be—seemed to establish beyond question that she was the true heiress; but, if so, why was Alvarez so eager for the conclusion of the match, so desirous of uniting the representative of an illustrious house with a merchant's son—he one of a nation, too, who for the most part are so absurdly prejudiced in favour of birth and rank? It was altogether too profound a puzzle for me; so I gave it up, comforting myself with the pleasant reflection, that Katerina, in whose favour I felt extremely prepossessed, would, however matters turned, have an amiable and attached husband, and a wealthy home. As to Alvarez and Senor Manuel, I cared but little how prosperously or otherwise their selfish ventures reached port or suffered wreck.

We—that is, Senor Manuel, his son, and myself—slept at San Lucar that night, and the next day the marriage contract was drawn up and executed. Senor Manuel, Alvarez, and the lover, of course, were extremely anxious that the wedding should take place immediately after the messenger who had been despatched to Sevilla with the precious document, upon which so much depended, returned with the bishop's authentication; and I also was, I confess, desirous that there should be no delay, which could not, it more fully struck me the oftener I reflected on the matter, work other than evil to one or both of the contracted

parties. But Katerina—I beg pardon, Constancia de Gonsalvo—was inexorably determined on procrastination, and was warmly supported in her resolve by her friend and confidante Luisa, upon the ground of some Spanish etiquette, decorum, or punctilio, which, they made clearly out to their own satisfaction, necessitated the delay of a month at the very least. We were obliged to yield the point, or nearly so; and it was finally settled that the 18th of October next ensuing should be the happy day.

Alas for the folly of human hopes and aspirations! The world had lived only to the morning of the 3rd of that month, when a panting messenger informed me that my presence was requested at Senor Manuel's without a moment's delay. It occurred to me that possibly the gout, which I knew had attacked his pedal extremities, might have assailed the more delicate and sensitive machinery of his stomach; but the first glimpse of the merchant and his son dispelled this fear. Senor Manuel was stamping up and down the counting-house, upon his flannelled legs, in a towering passion, cursing, lamenting, and screaming with pain, all in a breath; and poor Alfonso, utterly aghast and woe-begone, sat, statue-like, beside his desk, his sanguine complexion changed to the colour of the ashes of the half-consumed cigar lying neglected before him. Senor Manuel had an open letter in his hand. "Read that, sir!" he exclaimed, checking the ebullition of his wrath sufficiently to be intelligible—"read that, my good

friend, and give your advice. By San Jago! my head turns round like a top; ha! ho!—and Alfonso there never had one. The infamous *caròjo!* the rascal! ho! ha! read, my friend—read!"

I did as well as I could, but so ill-spelt a scrawl took some time to decipher. It was, I found, from Juan Alvarez; and the confused and confusing purport seemed to be, that the writer had heard of the death of Don Lopez de Gonsalvo; that the deceased's nephew, Antonio de Gonsalvo, had arrived at San Lucar de Barrameda, and claimed the guardianship of Dona Constancia, notwithstanding the clause in the testamentary act of her mother which, by implication at least, conferred that right on Alvarez. He—the nephew—moreover, insisted that not only should the proposed marriage be deferred, but all intercourse between the parties be peremptorily forbidden. The note concluded with the expression of a wish, that some one in whom Senor Manuel could confide—El Inglese perhaps, as least liable to suspicion—should come over and confer with him, Juan Alvarez, as if upon business.

"Well, what do you say, my friend?" said Senor Manuel. "I know that till your next letters arrive you will have plenty of leisure; and, as to expenses, I shall of course be liberal—ha! ho!"

Alfonso's miserable phiz influenced me more than the merchant's proffered liberality. The disappointment he was suffering under is, I quite well know, fatal only, like the *maladie de mer*, to excessively weak and sen-

sitive organisations, but, like that also in another respect, it is cruelly distressing whilst it lasts; and I consented, after a little hesitation, to do my best to set the troubled course of true love smooth again. Two hours afterwards I was on the road to San Lucar, it having taken Alfonso all that time to indite the voluminous love-epistle I had undertaken to place in Constancia's hands, but which, I rejoiced to think, it formed no part of my self-imposed mission to read.

I found Alvarez alone, and in very disconsolate, or, more properly speaking, oppressed mood. I don't know any other word that better expresses the sullen, angry dejection he appeared to labour under; whilst the quick-glancing, flurried expression I had at first remarked, shot more frequently than ever from out the depths of his dark, deep-set, cunningly-intelligent eyes. He appeared glad to see me; but so hesitating, disjointed, and often contradictory was his talk, that I had great difficulty in arriving at the following facts and semi-conclusions:—The nephew of Don Lopez was gone to Sevilla, to examine the document regis tered there, the authenticity of which he had the audacity, according to Alvarez, to dispute, notwithstanding the bishop's voucher, which, I have omitted to mention, had reached Senor Manuel in due course of post. If Katerina, however, *was* the daughter of Enrique and Constancia de Gonsalvo, then he, the nephew, assumed to be her legal guardian; and, as to her marriage with a vulgar trader's son, however rich, that he would not hear of; and till the young lady came of

age—and it wanted nearly four years of that—his, Antonio de Gonsalvo's, word would be law in the matter. He had also, I partly gathered by dint of a searching cross-examination, made other overtures and conditions, though of what precise nature Alvarez would not divulge; except that, for the present, the existence of the said heiress should be kept, as far as possible after what had passed, a close secret from the world. "You had better, therefore," Alvarez was saying, at the close of a long, unsatisfactory interview, "not attempt to see Katerina—Dona Constancia, I mean—as there is a servant left here who would no doubt inform his master. Ah! here he is! Prudence—silence!" he added in a hurried whisper, "or all will go wrong." This sudden break in our colloquy was occasioned by the entrance, by a gate opening from the Sevilla high-road, of a gentleman handsomely habited in deep mourning. It was Antonio de Gonsalvo, just returned from that city, and not looking, as it struck me from the slight glance I obtained of his jaundiced and bloated countenance, particularly well pleased with the result of his journey. He beckoned to Alvarez with the air of a master, and I heard the latter say, deprecatingly: "An Englishman in the wine and olive trade, on business." In another minute they disappeared within the house; and I turned away for a stroll through the grounds, but had not taken a dozen steps when Pedro, a sharp lad whom I had seen about the place, and who, I believe, was gardener, groom, waiter, errand-man, and housemaid

to the establishment, smilingly confronted me. He had a remarkably speaking countenance, had Pedro—so much so that I instantly, in reply to his mute but quite intelligible query, said: "To be sure I have a letter—here it is; and mind you tell the senoretta, to whom it is addressed, that I must have an answer within an hour from this, as I do not intend remaining later than that." He nodded with quick intelligence. and disappeared, but returned again very shortly with a flask of wine, a bundle of cigars, and some choice fruit, which he arrayed upon a rustic table near which I stood. This done, he merely said: "You will have the answer, senor, in good time," and once more disappeared.

I do not know when I have passed a much pleasanter hour than the immediately succeeding one. The weather was delightful—as fresh and much more balmy than an English June. The Atlantic gambolled and glittered in the far south,—it seemed for my especial amusement, for not another soul was anywhere to be seen; and the silver estuary of the Guadalquivir did the same on my right. The wine was capital, the cigars superb; and, thus circumstanced, it is not surprising that I quickly subsided into a state of single blessedness, which, in my opinion, the happiest husband would have no objection to find himself in now and then—that is, by way of change only. The woes and worries I have been relating were, it will be remembered, other people's—not mine; and

that is a burden, I have remarked, which, other matters being pleasant, may be borne with equanimity. Presently I began to consider whether the firm in the City would, if they knew all, exactly approve of a man of business, as Alvarez had truly said, in the wine and olive line, mixing himself up with the affairs of distressed damsels and mysterious dons, and nobody knew what mischief besides. This train of thought again led naturally to Mrs. Brown and the young barbarians all at play—if the weather were at all favourable —it being Saturday afternoon, at Highgate; and I had just finished a mental memorandum to the effect that it would be as well, on my return home, to draw it rather mild when talking of bright and black eyed Luisas, and Katerinas, and Constancias, when my drowsy ear became slowly conscious of the tones of Luisa's rich voice, somewhat angrily sharpened, exclaiming: "Hist! hist! Senor Inglese! *Madre de Dios!* he must be asleep. And at such a time, too! Senor Inglese! Englishman! hist! hist!"——

"I beg a thousand pardons, senoretta; but really this charming weather, and"——

"Hush! Step this way, if you please. They can see you from the house."

I obeyed, and Luisa, placing a letter in my hand, said softly: "From Dona Constancia-Isabella de Gonsalvo, for you know whom."

"It shall be delivered safely, be assured; but you have some more important communication to make

than any contained in the letter, or I misread the meaning of two of the brightest eyes in Spain."

"No silly compliments, senor, if you please," retorted the offended maiden. "That which I have further to say," she continued, after grave acceptance of my gestured apology, "concerns, though as yet I have not spoken to her of it, the Lady Constancia-Isabella de Gonsalvo intimately, deeply."

"Bless your pretty, affectionate punctilio!" thought I, as she ceased speaking. "You would not, I think, abate a syllable of one of Katerina's new names and titles if they reached the length of a racer's pedigree."

"I would say," resumed Luisa Alvarez in a quick-beating voice, "that a dark cloud menaces not only her so lately brilliant prospects, but"—the voice sank so low that I could hardly hear the words—"but her very life!"

"Merciful Heaven!"

"Listen to me. This Antonio de Gonsalvo is a bad, reckless man. I have overheard words that—I have overheard him, I say," faintly continued the terrified girl, who was momently becoming paler and paler, "make half suggestions to my father which induce me to believe that the least evil she may have to dread will be confinement, perhaps for ever, in a convent; and, even if that were all, she has, I assure you, senor, not the slightest vocation for such a life."

"That, I will be sworn, she has not."

"I might say more; but this is enough to put you—her friends, I mean—upon their guard. Nothing

must be done, however, rashly, as he is her legal guardian. Should there be necessity, I will send Pedro for you—for you, who would not, perhaps be suspected; and, if you were, you would not, I think, be afraid of this bad man, tiger as he seems? You English *hereticos*, I have heard my father say, are afraid of nothing; not even of—of the —— *Sancta Maria, ora pro me!*" she added, crossing herself, suddenly breaking off, and hurrying away; but whether as an expiation for the thought which seemed about to pass her lips, or as a prayer for protection against Antonio de Gonsalvo, who, with her father, came a minute after in view, I could not easily determine. She had, I conjectured, heard their footfall; but they, it was plain, had not observed her when conversing with me.

"I will see you presently, and endeavour to conclude our bargain," said Alvarez, as he passed me with his sinister-looking companion. I bowed, and they went away by the outer gate. Alvarez returned alone. He looked, it seemed to me, still more perplexed and cowed, and was certainly quite as unintelligible as at our previous interview; and all I could make out with tolerable distinctness was, that he, Alvarez, should be rather pleased than otherwise if the young people could manage to make a stolen match of it in such a way that he could not be suspected of complicity in the proceeding; but else, not for the world. Antonio de Gonsalvo had, he said, suddenly determined upon going to Madrid, and would not return before a fortnight had passed at the earliest.

The few scraps of information and conjecture with which I returned to Cadiz greatly annoyed, as I anticipated, my expectant friends there. But, as neither the angry irritation of Senor Manuel, nor the fretful despondency of his son, appeared likely to avail anything in the way of remedy to the actual state of things, I withdrew as speedily as I could from the bootless conference, half resolved in my own mind neither to make nor to meddle further in the matter. This partially formed purpose did not hold; partly because I continued to have so much idle time upon my hands, but chiefly that a deeper interest, a more tragic foreboding, than is involved in the anxieties and crosses of lovers, however dismal and agonising they may be, gradually overgrew the action of the domestic drama in which I had become unwittingly a somewhat prominent actor, determining me to go through with my part to the end, whether it was written that the curtain should fall upon the *spectra* of a criminal court and a death-scaffold, or the festivities of a happy marriage and a wedding-supper.

We heard one day, through Pedro, that Antonio de Gonsalvo had returned from Madrid before he was expected, and that a furious quarrel had immediately ensued between him and Juan Alvarez, which was, however, made up a few hours afterwards, and the two worthies had become more closely intimate than ever. Three days subsequent to this news, a hurried note reached Senor Manuel in Luisa's handwriting, but not

subscribed by her, stating, in general terms, that a great peril was suspended over the head of Lady Constancia de Gonsalvo, and that no time ought to be lost in extricating her from the custody of her unscrupulous guardian.

It was immediately resolved, in compliance with Alfonso's passionate entreaties, that an eminent lawyer of Cadiz should be consulted as to the steps it would be advisable to take. Alfonso and I—the gout still held the senor in durance—proceeded forthwith to the legal gentleman's office, and laid the entire matter before him as clearly and with as little prolixity as possible. The man of pleas and precedents listened to all we—I, rather, for Alfonso confined himself to the mute eloquence of pale looks and neglected hair—had to say; remarking, when I had quite finished, that it seemed a hard case for the young couple; but such wrinkles in one's lot always smoothe out with time and patience; that Antonio de Gonsalvo bore, he knew, a very indifferent reputation, and might certainly, under the influence of so strong a temptation, exceed even our worst anticipations; nevertheless, he was undoubtedly the young lady's natural guardian; and he, Martino Gomez, did not at all see how she could be got out of his hands. "Even this note which has so frightened you," he added, "is not, you perceive, signed; and, if it were, it could not avail, confined as it is to mere vague, indefinite assertion." This was cold comfort; but, as nothing better seemed to be forthcoming, we were

taking, quite chop-fallen, leave, when Martino Gomez, relaxing his wrinkles, said:—"Stay a moment. Why do you not apply to the young lady's maternal aunt, the Lady Inez de Calderon? She is, all Spain knows, very powerful at court—the queen-regent's favourite lady, in fact. She could interfere with effect; and it strikes me, from what I have heard of the character of Dona Inez, that she would do so."

This was quite a new as well as luminous idea. Alfonso caught at it eagerly, and so did his father the moment we reported it, not a little thereby surprising me; for, should the great court-lady interpose in behalf of her youthful niece, it would not be, I guessed, in order to marry her to Alfonso Manuel. This view of the subject I, however, kept to myself; and it was at length arranged that I should at once proceed to Madrid — obtain, if possible, an interview with this Lady Inez de Calderon—Senor Manuel to defray all expenses, of course—and endeavour to interest her in favour of the distressed lovers. Alfonso wished to accompany me, but this the merchant would not listen to, his presence being required in the counting-house; besides, he would do far more harm than good if he went, his father flatteringly added.

I had fallen in with this proposal the more easily, that I had a great desire to see the Spanish capital; and I did so for the first time on the 21st of November, 1833, after a long and tedious journey; the discomfort, ay, and danger of which, only those

who have travelled in Spain or in the Bedouin Desert can correctly appreciate. I speak of Spain as it was twenty years ago; what improvements have been since effected is, of course, another question, upon which I am not competent to offer an opinion. The day after my arrival in Madrid, I despatched, by one of the waiters at El Rey, near the Plaza Mayor, where I had taken up my temporary abode, a carefully and elaborately worded missive to the palace, addressed to Her Excellency the Lady Inez de Calderon. Three days passed without an answer—a fourth, up till a late hour in the afternoon, when I was met, on returning from a walk, with the intelligence that a court-messenger had been waiting upwards of an hour for me, and was stamping the floor with impatience. This was, I found, quite true; and the irate and hasty gentleman would not even allow me five minutes to change my dress—a short, rough winter's coat, cloth knees, and continuations ditto—the Lady Inez de Calderon, who had just returned with the court from La Granja, would, he said, excuse my strange attire: she had been in England or Iceland, he hardly knew which, perhaps both, and knew how people dressed in those countries; and, at all events, to the palace I must go, *nolens volens*, and at once. I was preciously flurried, I know; and this feeling increased to an intensely uncomfortable pitch, as I hastily traversed the spacious quadrangle, ascended one of the magnificent staircases, and shuffled along the stately corridors of the gor-

geously solemn palace; passing here and there, and occasionally glimpsing in the distance, a number of silent figures, looking, in their velvet mourning-dresses, like so many melancholy Hamlets gliding about in pursuit of invisible ghosts. At length my conductor stopped at the door of an anteroom, and rang a small silver bell lying on a marble table just on the outside. A page admitted us, and in another minute I was in the presence of Dona Inez de Calderon and another lady, whose name I did not hear. The novel and imposing aspect of the magnificent apartment, with its pillars, statues, and massively gorgeous furniture, brilliantly lit up from innumerable antique candelabra, so dazzled and confounded me, that it was some minutes before I was fully conscious that the Lady Inez, painfully agitated, and holding my letter in her hand, was assailing me with an avalanche of questions, which, spoken as they were with intense volubility, and in a tongue which, though I knew it very well, was not my own vernacular, I should have had considerable difficulty in following at any time. Presently, the speaker, perceiving my embarrassment, gave herself breath and me a few moments to rally my bewildered faculties. I succeeded in doing so more quickly than I expected, and replied to the lady's renewed and still impetuous interrogatory pretty well. "A strange story," she murmured musingly, after exhausting every form of query she could think of—"a strange story. Constancia had reason whilst her uncle lived for not con-

fiding in me, but that so many years should have been permitted to pass is—— I cannot," she continued with quite audible abruptness—"I cannot recognise any resemblance to the families on either side in the description you give of the supposed niece of mine. Have the goodness to follow me, and I will show you an admirable likeness of my sister taken previous to her marriage." Her companion, who, I comprehended, was an attendant in waiting, hastened to open a door at the further end of the apartment, through which the great lady—she was a handsome woman, and under forty I should say—sailed with stately grace, the attendant and myself following. The Lady Inez de Calderon led the way to a picture gallery, and, pausing before a full-length figure, said, in a slightly agitated voice: "That is Dona Constancia de Gonsalvo's likeness, taken when she was, I think, not more than nineteen."

I started with uncontrollable surprise, and blurted out: "Good Heaven! why, that is Luisa Alvarez!"

"Luisa Alvarez!" echoed the lady. "The daughter of the man you spoke of!"

"Yes, lady, so it is said; but this portrait—for the likeness is too complete, too unmistakable, to admit of a doubt on the matter—revives a suspicion I had before entertained, that Katerina is the true daughter of Juan Alvarez—Luisa the true Constancia de Gonsalvo."

"Yours is not a nation of plotters," said the lady,

after fixedly, almost sternly, regarding me for one or two embarrassing minutes; "nor have you the air of either a dupe or a tool, or I should imagine—— But follow me: we will talk further on this matter, which shall, at all events, be thoroughly sifted."

"I remember," said the lady-attendant, as soon as we had regained the apartment into which I was first shown, and Dona Inez was seated—"I remember that, about ten days, or, it may be, a fortnight ago, a gentleman, calling himself Antonio de Gonsalvo, called at the palace, and obtained permission to see the Lady Constancia's portrait."

"Who gave permission in my absence, and without my leave?"

"The Camerera Mayor," replied the lady.

"This is a significant circumstance coupled with —— But your letter, sir, states—and you confirmed the statement just now—that the paper or parchment, the authenticity of which the bishop, whose testimony cannot be for an instant questioned, vouches for, describes the person of Katerina with the nicest accuracy, even to a slight scar on the forehead, and moles in the neck."

"That is strictly true, and, since I have seen the Lady Constancia's portrait, utterly confounds me."

"There are no erasures in the document, you say? Clever tricks of that sort are sometimes played."

"I examined it with scrupulous, I may say sus-

picious care, and I am positive there are no erasures or alterations—no "——

A bustle at the entrance from the grand corridor, and the exclamation of the attendant, "El Reyna Christina," interrupted me; and a lady, attired as if just returned from a carriage-drive, entered the apartment, followed by a number of attendants of both sexes. I trebled my distance, already sufficiently respectful, from Dona Inez, towards whom the queen-regent advanced with a kind and familiar greeting; but my movement was not executed so quickly as to escape her majesty's glance of surprise, followed, I was sure, by the query, though I could not hear the words, of whom the remarkable figure in drab shorts, and gaiters of the same, might be. At the same moment, all the other eyes in the room, among which there were at least a dozen of the brightest in Spain, glittered with the same expression; while I, frightfully isolated in about the centre of the brilliant apartment—there was nothing, not even a statue or a chair, within half-a-dozen yards of me—remained helplessly rooted where I stood, the observed of all observers, and alternately a flame and an icicle, in a profuse heat or a cold perspiration. The queen's attendants formed a segment of a circle out of earshot of her majesty and Dona Inez, and I was about equidistant from both—the centre figure, in fact, of the stately tableau; and hang me if I knew, when I came to think of it, how to place my legs or what to do with my arms, notwithstanding I

had the advantage of seeing every change of attitude I adopted, about every half-minute, I should say, or less, repeated with faithful instantaneousness by about twenty John Browns, brilliantly revealed by the tall mirrors as the central personages of as many courtly circles. This purgatory lasted about ten minutes, during which the queen and Dona Inez conversed with great earnestness upon, I rightly guessed, the subject which had brought me into my present distinguished position. I may here mention that, confused as I was, it instantly and forcibly struck me—and the truth of the impression I have since heard confirmed by persons who have had many opportunities of judging—that the queen-regent, at the time I saw her, about, I should suppose, seven or eight and twenty, greatly resembled in figure, face, carriage, and general expression, save that her complexion was a clear olive, and her features and person somewhat fuller, Miss Ellen Tree, the eminent actress, now Mrs. Charles Kean. This, however, by the way. I was at length waved forward by Dona Inez, and had the honour of replying to a number of questions by her majesty, who appeared to take a lively interest in the Alvarez-Gonsalvo business. To add to my embarrassment, her majesty, whenever my Castilian halted a little, condescended to help me out by a sentence or two of what must have been intended for English—I am a tolerable linguist, and quite sure it was not

French, Italian, German, or Dutch—of which it was necessary to affect immediate and grateful comprehension. I, however, got through pretty well; "Los Ingleses" were in high favour just then—thanks to the hostile proceedings of Don Carlos—at the Spanish court; and, a dismissing gesture to that effect being at last vouchsafed, I backed away, as I had seen a mantled and feathered Don do just before, and with, I flatter myself, much imitative celerity, till brought up with a bump by one of the marble columns, in the shadow of which I remained in some sort *perdu* till the audience terminated.

The conversation between Christina and Dona Inez quickly terminated after I was done with, and I heard the queen-regent say, on rising to go: "That, I think, will be the best, the most prudent course to take; and I will take care that the captain-general of Andalucia shall have orders to assist you to the utmost of his power." Her majesty and train then disappeared, and I was once more in close conference with Dona Inez. The conclusion come to was, that I should set out the next day for Cadiz, and, on arriving there, inform Senor Manuel and his son that Lady Inez de Calderon would speedily follow, in order to the thorough investigation of the matter I had been deputed to lay before her; but I was not to say one word of the resemblance of Luisa Alvarez to the portrait of the deceased Lady Constancia; it being of the utmost importance, in the

opinion of Dona Inez, that no hint should reach Alvarez of the suspicion which that circumstance had engendered.

On arriving at Cadiz, I found the Manuels in a state of high excitement. Sure intelligence had reached them that Katerina—or Dona Constancia, as they of course still implicitly believed her to be—would never be Alfonso's wife if many days were suffered to elapse without bringing about the accomplishment of that great fact; and my news, that the Lady Inez, armed with the full powers of the captain-general, would shortly arrive, greatly stimulated the eagerness of both father and son to conclude the affair before so potent a personage arrived on the scene—a dim inkling of the view she would be likely to take of the plebeian alliance having at last dawned on their minds. Their plan, as detailed to me by Alfonso, was feasible and likely enough; and not later than the next day but one had, I found, been fixed upon for carrying it into execution. It was this: Luisa Alvarez had been for some years accustomed to make a votive journey to the church of the convent of Los Gozos de Neustra Senora, on the anniversary of, I believe, her reputed mother's death. This was the day fixed upon, as no impediment—although *both* the damsels were now closely confined and watched—would be offered to her purpose, Alvarez having incidentally asked her at what hour she intended setting out and returning. Katerina was to dress herself in Luisa's clothes, and, thus disguised,

leave the house; and on her return from the convent—for it seemed that it could not be managed earlier—step on board a boat at a landing-place on the Guadalquivir, by which, without any risk of recapture, she would be conveyed across the water to the church of San Salvador, where the indissoluble knot would be immediately tied by a priest in waiting for the purpose.

I was a good deal startled by this bold project; but, even had I not been fettered by the promise insisted upon by the Lady Inez, I should not, I think, have hinted a word on the possibility of Katerina's turning out, after all, to be not a grandee of the first class, but simply Katerina Alvarez—the effect of which would, I well knew, have been to quench instantly Manuel senior's chivalrous enthusiasm in favour of the distressed and amply dowered damsel. Further reflection, moreover, suggested a doubt of the significance of the apparently careless question of Alvarez respecting his reputed daughter's journey. If the intention of the confederates were to carry her off, or if a darker purpose had been settled upon—for I was quite sure that Antonio de Gonsalvo knew, from the sight he had obtained of the picture in the palace at Madrid, which was the real Constancia—it would be much easier of accomplishment when she was away from home, and journeying by herself along the solitary road leading to the convent. The proposed substitution of Katerina for Luisa would of course, if successfully carried into effect, mar the design of the con-

spirators, whatever it might be; and thus, albeit it was quite possible that the wedding-project would be frustrated, a sufficient delay might occur to permit of the arrival of Dona Inez and the interposition of the captain-general, who would, I nothing doubted, make short work of the matter.

The very next afternoon Dona Inez arrived in Cadiz, and I was instantly summoned to her presence. I found the captain-general—a fine soldierly man of the name of O'Donnell, and, I believe, of Irish descent—with her, and the mode of operation, trenchant and summary as I had anticipated, thoroughly agreed upon. The two damsels were to be seized and given over to the custody of the Lady Inez; Alvarez and Antonio de Gonsalvo, with the latter's two servants, were also to be secured and despatched to Sevilla, separately imprisoned there, and kept so till the exact and entire truth with regard to the alleged Constancia had been extracted from them. All papers, or other articles of a promising or suggestive kind, in Alvarez's house, or on his or his friends' persons, were also to be seized and impounded for the same purpose. I was meditating whether it might not be as well to inform these peremptory personages of the little wedding under-plot going on, when I was turned mentally topsy-turvy by the general's intimation, after a sentence or two in an under-tone with Senora de Calderon, that I was in the category of persons to be provisionally impounded. "Not," said the general

with a grim smile—"not from any doubt of your good faith in this matter, but in order to guard against any possible indiscretion in your communications with the traders, who appear so very desirous of allying themselves with the nobility of Spain." This was, I felt, after what had passed, very scurvy treatment; and I was coming out strong in the British-flag-and-freedom line, when my indignant eloquence was cut short by the general's "Tut, tut, man; no insult or harm is intended you; and the moment the different parties are in custody, you shall be released—with thanks. Besides, you know the road and the fellows' persons, and can assist us in that way. Lieutenant Davila," he added, addressing an officer of lancers who entered the apartment in obedience to the summons of a hand-bell on the table, "take charge of this gentleman, and see that he is properly accommodated. He sets out with us in an hour from the present time." This was no doubt excessively annoying and impertinent; but, as there was no help for it, I submitted, after the first ruffle of angry vexation had subsided, with tolerable cheerfulness to a restraint which, though quite real, was civilly enough enforced. Our party reached that evening about three leagues on the road to San Lucar; and at nine on the following morning we again set off, the captain-general and Senora Inez in a carriage, and I in the centre of the leading files of a company of lancers.

The weather was as sullen and scowling as I, suf-

fering from a thin pair of trousers and the hardest-trotting brute a man ever bestrode, speedily became; and to this I attributed the sense of dismal apprehension which, for no definite or tangible reason, darkened over me as we approached, towards three in the afternoon, the dwelling of Juan Alvarez. Not a soul was to be seen in or about the house or grounds till the rattling cortège halted and drew up before the outer gate, when Pedro's wonder-widened mouth and eyes greeted us from a lower window. No ceremony was used. Senora de Calderon and the general quickly alighted from the carriage, and, preceded by an officer and a couple of privates, entered the house. I remained with the bulk of the soldiers, just outside the door; and a very few moments passed before a loud, exultant, yet agitated scream proclaimed to me that the Lady Inez had found and recognised a niece in the breathing, glowing incarnation of the picture I had seen at Madrid. It was not long before I was sent for, and found the bewildered, blushing, weeping, half-terrified girl entwined in her aunt's arms, who was perusing Luisa's handsome features with an intensity of love and grief that spoke eloquently for the tenacity of affection she had cherished for the memory of her long since deceased sister. Pedro had been caught, and was brought in at the same time; and he explained the cause of the absence of Katerina, and conjecturally that of Juan Alvarez. Katerina, habited as Luisa Alvarez, had set out about two hours

previously for the convent, and Juan Alvarez had followed by the same road about one hour afterwards, accompanied by the Senor de Gonsalvo. The two servants Pedro had not seen all day. So perfectly satisfied was the lady that she held her true niece in her arms, that she merely smiled good-humouredly when Pedro, whom the sudden apparition of so many fierce-looking soldiers had terribly scared, blurted out that "Katerina—he meant Dona Constancia de Gonsalvo—was gone to be married to Senor Alfonso Manuel!" As it was, however, of the first importance that Juan Alvarez and his confederate should be captured without delay, Lieutenant Davila was ordered off with a party of the lancers for that purpose, accompanied and guided by myself and Pedro; Senora de Calderon, Luisa, the general, and remainder of the troops, setting off forthwith, as evening was fast approaching, on the road to Sevilla.

Half an hour's smart trot brought us to a turn in the route from which the east bank of the Guadalquivir and the road along it could be seen for a considerable distance. This was the way Katerina was to come; and we moved on more slowly and cautiously, keeping as much as possible within the shadow of the wood on our left. Presently, one of the men who rode with Pedro in advance reined up, and pointed with his lance to the figures of two men on horseback, partially disclosed through the openings of the trees behind which they stood, intently watching, it was manifest,

the path along the river from the convent. They were Juan Alvarez and Senor de Gonsalvo: there could be no doubt about that; but, as they appeared well mounted, the lieutenant, instead of dashing forward into the open space which intervened between us and them, resolved upon the safer plan of making a considerable circuit, and coming upon them unawares from the rear. This movement occupied perhaps ten minutes; but almost immediately on our coming again in view of the two horsemen, they started off at a gallop towards the river-bank, just about there high, rocky, and steep. We also spurred swiftly but quietly on, the soft turf deadening the sound of the horses' hoofs, and permitting us, unfortunately, as it proved, to near them unobserved. We were quickly aware of the motive of this sudden movement. Katerina, habited in the dress—a peculiar one as to make and colour—usually worn by Luisa, had reached a part of the high, rocky bank within, I judged, about fifty yards of the ordinary landing-place, and was waving a handkerchief and making eager gestures riverward, Alvarez and Gonsalvo vehemently shouting to her the while. They had approached within a short distance, when an answering cry was heard from the river, and Katerina, with her back to the pursuers, began to descend slowly the bank on the other side. Another minute or two, and she must have been safe in the boat which had arrived so opportunely; and the certainty that she would be so no doubt determined Senor Gonsalvo

to prevent her escape by any crime and at all hazards. Sharply reining up, and snatching a long cavalry-pistol from its holster, he, with at least the tacit consent of Alvarez, who rode close by his side, and might easily have struck his arm up had he so willed, levelled a pistol, fired—the explosion, and a piteous scream from the unfortunate girl as she toppled over the crag into the river, mingling with the fierce execrations of myself and the greater part of the soldiers with whom I rode, who were by this time close upon them. They turned, panic-stricken at the sound, and, although taken at such disadvantage, made a desperate effort to escape. A sergeant and three men were briefly bidden to ascertain the young woman's fate, whom I should have accompanied but for a forbidding gesture of the lieutenant's; and we started in headlong chase.

At the distance of about four miles from the scene of the frightful tragedy we had so unexpectedly witnessed—for no one who saw the shot had the slightest doubt that the girl was killed—we came up with and captured the two ruffians, who were immediately bound and placed apart. Peremptory orders were given neither to speak to nor answer any question that might be put by them; and Lieutenant Davila was about to give the word to advance, when I rather angrily intimated, that, as there could be no further pretence for detaining me, I must be set at liberty forthwith. This was at once and decisively refused; the general, either from forgetfulness or design, had given no order

for my liberation, and I must therefore proceed on to Sevilla, or, at all events, till we overtook the general. "The Devil take Sevilla and the general into the bargain!" I burst out in great wrath. But I might have spared my breath: the words, "Alert!—forward!" were quickly given; the bugle sounded, and away I was painfully borne with the rest, bitterly lamenting that I had ever permitted myself to be mixed up in so unfortunate, so disastrous an affair.

We reached Sevilla on the third day of that detestable journey, from the effects of which I did not thoroughly recover for a fortnight. The captain-general, whom we found there, was pleased to express a polite regret for the unpleasant duress I had been subject to, excusing it, however, on the plea of necessity; pleasantly adding, that in the interest of justice it was necessary that I should remain for some time longer under the surveillance of Lieutenant Davila, who would treat me with every civility and consideration consistent with not permitting me, on any pretence, to communicate, even by letter, with a living soul. This cool insolence was really unbearable, and I flamed away at a great rate till I was out of breath—to all which the sole reply vouchsafed was, that the instant the trial of Alvarez and his confederate for the murder of the young woman by the Guadalquivir, for which my evidence was required, had concluded, I should be set at liberty! The sergeant of lancers and his men—Lieutenant Davila had informed me, previous to this

interview—were arrived, and had reported that the assassin's bullet had pierced the brain of the unfortunate girl, and that death had consequently been instantaneous. It was not me alone that the high and mighty captain-general treated in this infamous manner. Senor Manuel—the lieutenant, two or three days subsequently, informed me—having arrived in Sevilla in obedience to the general's summons, bringing with him some letters that were wanted, was arrested the moment he entered the city, and, to his infinite surprise and indignation, placed in solitary confinement, which he was rendering incessantly vocal by ejaculations to all the saints in the calendar—San Jago in particular—touching the astounding treatment to which he, a loyal and wealthy Spaniard, was so incomprehensibly exposed.

His expostulations, like my own, were only laughed at, and we both perforce waited for such explanation as time might bring of the extraordinary treatment to which we were condemned. It was not long before I pretty well guessed the motives of all this precautionary rigour. Neither of the prisoners, I heard from the lieutenant, who was tolerably communicative in some respects, had made any revelation beyond a declaration by Alvarez that the fatal shot was fired without his consent, and appealing with well-simulated pathos to all men who were fathers on the impossibility of the crime with which he was charged. The examining judge had then been careful to conceal from

him as yet that it was Katerina, not Luisa, he had been accessory to the destruction of, reserving that, I concluded, for a sudden blow at a later and more suitable part of the process; and it was in order, no doubt, that the effect of the announcement, which I very well understood might elicit an involuntary confession of great importance for the determination of the legal claims of the Senora de Calderon's niece, should not be marred in consequence of its prematurely coming to his knowledge, that I and others likely to speak of the change of dress and persons on that unhappy afternoon had been temporarily secured and silenced: and yet there was, I felt, but slight necessity for such extreme caution. There was on my mind not the faintest doubt that whenever or however the terrible announcement was made to the miserable man, that he had in very truth been an accomplice, more or less active and consenting, in the murder of his own daughter—of that Katerina whom it was so easy to see he loved with such entire and passionate affection—the tempest of remorse and agony by which he would be convulsed and torn must rend asunder all disguises, sweep away all deceits, however cunningly contrived; and that especially the man by whose hand Katerina had actually fallen would be instantly denounced, and the fraud with regard to Luisa, by which the assassin's family, if not himself, might thereafter profit, would be exposed with vengeful promptness.

This, however, was clearly not the opinion of the

Lady Inez and her counsellors; and it was soon, moreover, quite plain to me, that the object of the investigation going forward was, but in a very inferior degree, the conviction and punishment of Katerina's murderers, even as regards the officials, high and low, of the Sevilla Chancellaria. The chief aim manifestly was to obtain judicial proof that Luisa was the legitimate Gonsalvo heiress, and this purpose was, I must say, worked out with equal skill, audacity, and perseverance. They examined me very slightly with respect to the shooting by the Guadalquivir, but with elaborate minuteness as to the conversations I had with Alvarez relative to the Senor de Gonsalvo, with a view, it seemed, to show the *animus* of the confederates. Josè Perez was brought from Madrid for the same purpose, and deposed to the conversation on the Puerta del Sol, already given.

At last I was informed that, most of the preliminary forms having been gone through, the trial of the prisoners was about really to commence, and that myself and other witnesses would be present to hear our evidence read over, that it might be confirmed in the presence of the accused. I do not know whether this is the ordinary mode of judicial procedure in Spain, and I am the more inclined to doubt that it is, from what subsequently occurred, leading to a suspicion that the chiefs of the Chancellaria had been induced, in order to gratify a lady possessed of great influence at headquarters, to vary somewhat the mode of trial.

The Hall of Justice at Sevilla is, or was, a large, heavily-fitted place, impressing one with a solemnity and awe that hardly required to be increased by the grave and imposing costume of the principal officials, and the black velvet hangings and other mourning paraphernalia set up in memory of the late King Ferdinand. There was no public, properly so called, only about twenty or thirty persons beside the witnesses, and all, I observed, admitted by especial favour; amongst whom Lady Inez de Calderon and the captain-general were conspicuously placed. Myself, Josè Perez, and Pedro—who whispered that he also had been imprisoned from the moment of his arrival in this incomprehensible city, why or what for he could not even guess—sat together, and were presently cautioned by a black-browed alguazil, who had just before been beckoned to by the president-judge, not to speak one word except in answer to such questions as he, the president, might himself put to us; the said alguazil taking his seat in our midst for the purpose, I presumed, of enforcing if necessary the command of which he was the bearer. By-and-by, my coat collar was seized from behind and shaken violently, a proceeding but confusedly interpreted by the hardly recognisable tones of Senor Manuel's voice—so fear-suppressed, yet fierce, angry, and indignant, were they: "Ha! ha! I say, Senor Inglese, John Brown, Englishman"—these three words comprised my friend's entire stock of English, and were not brought into requisition except when

he was extremely angry and inclined to be impertinent —"you are in the hole yourself, are you? I am glad of it with all my heart; and I say, my friend, you may take that account for the journey to Madrid to those who showed you the picture, for, by San Jago"——

"Silence! silence!—that way, sir!" called out our alguazil friend, at the same time pushing Senor Manuel with some violence in the direction indicated by his staff-armed fist. The poor senor, whose face was purple with rage and perplexity, did as he was ordered; and I observed him a few minutes after seated nearly opposite, and every now and then indulging in a pantomimic demonstration, which, except in its expression of fury and bewilderment, was altogether unintelligible to me.

The prisoners were at length brought in separately, and placed at a baize-covered railing, and the questioning process by the president commenced after the reading of the depositions, during which the witnesses stood erect, and once more declared, with the right arm raised and pointing upwards, that we had spoken the truth as in the presence of God and his saints.

Antonio de Gonsalvo was the first interrogated. He answered, in substance, that the pistol had gone off unintentionally; that he had merely meant to frighten the girl; and no one could more lament the fatal result than he did—a result in which he could have had no sinister interest whatever. "Had

it, indeed, been the young person known as Katerina, who was reported to be the heiress of the Gonsalvo property"——

He was stopped by an exclamation of rage from Senor Manuel, which brought upon that witness an instant sentence of removal to a distant and obscure part of the *sala*, with the intimation that, if he presumed again to offer the slightest comment upon what was said, he would be immediately sent to prison.

"Had it been," resumed the prisoner, "the young person known as Katerina, who, it was asserted, had claims, whether ill or well founded was another matter, to the Gonsalvo estates and honours, there might have been some colour for the heinous but utterly unfounded crime; but, under the actual circumstances, none whatever existed." A meaning smile glanced, as the accused spoke, towards the Lady Inez and the captain-general from the president-judge, but no commentary in words followed the coolly audacious statement.

It was soon Juan Alvarez's turn, and, after much inconsequent interrogatory, to which he mainly replied —exhibiting all the while an affectation of intense grief —that, whether the pistol was discharged by accident, as he believed, or by design, he, Juan Alvarez, was entirely innocent thereof; his sole purpose in galloping towards his daughter (whose strange position and action, in making signals to somebody on the river, he

had, from accidentally passing that way, beheld with astonishment) being to inquire the meaning of such conduct—the real business of the *audencia* commenced.

"The time is at length arrived, Juan Alvarez and Antonio de Gonsalvo," said the presiding magistrate with grave solemnity, "when it is necessary that I should inform you both, that we are aware of a circumstance which entirely destroys the very slight plausibility of your statements. You, Alvarez, attempted to substitute your own child for the one placed in your charge"——

"Ha!"

"Ay, now, that is a natural movement and expression. This cheat Antonio de Gonsalvo discovered, taxed you with, and, finding further deception vain so far as he was concerned, you agreed with him to confine Luisa in some remote place, by virtue of your usurped authority of father; or—and this, from what subsequently passed, has a more horrible likelihood—you finally, perhaps reluctantly, consented to a darker purpose"——

"Never, never! I swear by the holy saints!" exclaimed Alvarez, whose features, like those of De Gonsalvo, were changing to the hue of ashes. "Never, I swear!"

"Listen, unhappy man. I have another and much more terrible revelation to make: she whom you met, at whose life your confederate in crime levelled his

murderous pistol—with your consent, I can hardly doubt—was in very truth your own child Katerina, who"——

A wild, frenzied cry from Alvarez interrupted the magistrate. But for the flashing eyes, from which lightning had seemed to leap as the president's words fell in thunder upon his brain, one might have thought the wretched man had been suddenly changed to stone, so white, rigid, motionless, were his aspect and posture. I glanced towards De Gonsalvo. He also was strongly agitated, but in a much less degree of course, and was wiping his clammy forehead with a handkerchief. At last he said, after three or four efforts which had died upon his parched and twitching lips: "It is a trick, Juan—a trick, be assured!" Alvarez heard him, turned slowly round, and fixed his burning eyes for a few moments upon De Gonsalvo's face, then closed them, and pressed the palms of his hands forcibly over the lids, as if to calm himself, and rally his bewildered faculties by the extrusion of exterior objects. "You know your daughter's writing?" said the president, after a lengthened and unbroken silence. De Gonsalvo, I should state, had been removed, in obedience to a sign from the judge.

The question was repeated three times without eliciting an answer. At last an attendant alguazil shook the prisoner roughly by the arm, and repeated it in a harsh, menacing tone. "Yes—yes," Alvarez slowly said; "I do."

"Then read this letter, and convince yourself of the truth of what you have just heard."

A letter—one from Katerina to Alfonso Manuel, detailing the scheme arranged with Luisa for a change of dresses—was handed across the court, and placed in the accused's hands. He glanced at the lines, shuddered, the paper dropped from his nerveless grasp to the floor, and he said faintly: "I know the character. It is Ka—— hers. Read for me: my eyes dazzle."

His request was complied with. During the reading, it would have seemed, from the long-drawn, agonising groan which accompanied it, that a sword was passing slowly through the body of the writhing, wretched man, whose head had sunk down upon the railing in his front. There was another long, oppressive pause, terminated by the president saying: "I will remove any doubt that may yet linger in your mind. If the project mentioned in the letter had not been persisted in, you would have met Luisa, as you believed you did, instead of Katerina. Let the former lady be brought in," he added with a sign to an attendant, "and confronted with the prisoner. Now, Juan Alvarez, look up, and disbelieve if you can the evidence of your own senses."

As the president's voice ceased, and amidst a breathless stillness, the prisoner's head was gradually raised and directed towards that part of the hall where the swinging of a door and the shuffling of feet announced the entrance of the new-comer. A renewal, but much

weaker, of the terrible cry which the first intimation of the truth had wrung from Alvarez, proclaimed his recognition of the supposedly slain Luisa. It was followed by a convulsive but vain effort at articulate speech, and the next moment he had fallen across the railing without sense or motion.

The sitting of the tribunal was immediately suspended, and the prisoner removed, and a buzz of excitement pervaded the auditory for perhaps half an hour, when the president resumed his seat, and the murmuring hum of voices subsided once more into profound silence, to hear a communication read by one of the officers who had gone out with the accused. Juan Alvarez, it was formally stated, had volunteered, the instant he was restored to consciousness, to make a full confession upon all matters connected with the present inquiry. Antonio de Gonsalvo *had* discovered the fraud with respect to Dona Constancia, and a scheme had finally been matured for the disposal of that young lady, who was to have been taken and kept out of the country by her reputed father. For doing so, Alvarez was to have received a very large reward, with which, he said, he believed the Senor Manuel could have been induced to consent to his son's marriage with Katerina—a union which he, the deponent, believed to be necessary to her happiness. The firing of the pistol had been wilful, malevolent, the words used by De Gonsalvo, as he drew the trigger, having been: "She shall not escape, by ——,

let the consequence be what it may." "As to the description of the child's person on the parchment, which it could be seen had been written in a separate paragraph, apart from the body of the writing as it were, an alteration had been effected in the following manner by one Pasco, a singularly skilful caligraphist, residing at Lagos, in Algarve, Portugal. He had carefully pumiced out the original words, and written those descriptive of Katerina over them. But he, Pasco, had told deponent that, if the super-writing were carefully removed, and a moderate heat applied to the parchment, the original words would distinctly reappear." This was the substance of the confession; and it may be as well to state at once, that the experiment suggested was afterwards successfully performed, and Luisa's right to the name of Constancia-Isabella de Gonsalvo, and the solid appurtenances thereto belonging, established beyond question.

The agitation which followed the reading of Alvarez's confession was of an altogether exultant kind with nearly all the persons present, and it certainly could not be denied that the affair had been cleverly managed; but with one, and more especially poor Pedro, whose grief for the fate of Katerina was bitter and vehement, the feeling was a very different one; so much so, that when the Lady Inez—sweeping triumphantly past, accompanied by her niece, who looked, I was perfectly shocked to see, radiantly, proudly happy—requested me to call on her the next

day, that she might in some degree compensate me for the inconvenience to which I had been put, the choking emotion of anger I felt would, I am pretty sure, have been expressed in very unwise words, but that the great lady was gone before I could fashion the indignant rebuke which trembled at my heart into articulate utterance.

Senor Manuel's morose peevishness jumped better with my irritated humour; and, hearing that, like myself and others, he was at last released from surveillance, I waited, with weeping, heart-broken Pedro, for him in an anteroom, through which he would necessarily pass. Nor had we long to wait: he came up very quickly, his features still swollen and spotted with angry dismay.

"Ha! ha!" he burst out again the instant he caught sight of me—"you, Inglese, John Brown, Englishman! you have been shut up too, I hear; and, by San Jago! I am glad of it, with all my heart!"

"You are disposed to be insolent, Senor Manuel, and I am not at all in the mind to brook it patiently. So terrible a catastrophe should, one would suppose, make a serious impression upon the most stolid, wooden natures. Your son, I am sure, must be suffering poignantly."

"My son be hanged! He suffering poignantly!—pooh! It is I, sir, that am suffering poignantly—I, that am heart-broken, overwhelmed, desolated, destroyed by this atrocious business!"

"Atrocious indeed, and horrible beyond measure, that a father should have been the originating cause of poor Katerina's dreadful fate."

"Katerina's dreadful fate! By San Jago!—— But what do you mean by Katerina's dreadful fate?"

"To be shot or drowned may surely be called so."

"Fiddle-de-dee! shot or drowned! Married and made her fortune, you mean! Why, San Jago! what are you dreaming about? Didn't you know, then, that the confounded puss got only a fright and a ducking, and married Alfonso the very next morning?"

Pedro and I had set up a simultaneous and joyous whoop that might have been, and I daresay was, heard half a mile off. I could hardly believe that I heard aright; and we both assailed the indignant merchant with a torrent of questions, the chief result of which was to increase his angry consternation.

"Where are they, do you say? How can I tell? Spending the honeymoon and my money in Madrid or Paris—who knows? They set off like a prince and princess directly after the ceremony, and I have been locked up, for my share, almost ever since! And Luisa turns out to be the true De Gonsalvo, after all; and Katerina, confound her! that villain Juan's portionless daughter! And you, Senor Inglese," he continued, blazing up into fierce wrath—"you knew or guessed all this when you were in Madrid; for which

journey I was to pay, too; but, by San Jago! if ever I give a maravedi, I wish"——

Here Pedro and I bolted off, half suffocated with laughter, and pursued by the old gentleman's fierce vituperation, which, however, gradually died away as we threaded the tortuous passages of the old place towards the street; and before ten minutes had passed Pedro and I were seated, jolly as sand-boys, over some excellent wine, and smoking, laughing, shouting, and by-and-by dancing—Pedro, that is, commenced a fandango to his own music till stopped by the host—like two maniacs. The whole matter was clear to me now: the locking us all up; the despotic conduct of the captain-general — it was all explained; and very cleverly, I fully agreed, had the thing been managed. Alvarez, I concluded, as nobody had been killed, would, partly for Katerina's sake, be let off pretty easily; and that rascal De Gonsalvo, for other reasons, be permitted to escape with comparative impunity. I was right in both instances. The ex-captain of artillery was not long afterwards released, and, to show his gratitude for the queen-regent's clemency, immediately joined the motley ranks in arms for Don Carlos, in which company he ultimately received his reward in the shape of a bullet through the head. Juan Alvarez returned to his place near San Lucar, but not to survive very long. The shock he had experienced had broken him down both physically and morally: he never completely rallied; and a plain cross, in the

tombyard of Los Gozos de Neustra Senora, inscribed with his initials and the date of his death, marks the grave which, it may be truly said, his own hands had prematurely prepared.

I did not fail to wait upon Lady Inez de Calderon, as she had requested, and was so kindly and handsomely compensated for my share of the happily accomplished work, that the numerous stirring appeals to the British Lion which I had prepared during my *quasi*-captivity, being thereby rendered useless, were forthwith committed to the flames. From Dona Constancia de Gonsalvo, whose rank appeared to sit as easily upon her as if she had been to the manner bred as well as born, I received remembrances, presents, keepsakes, and a letter at least as long as this narrative for the young Senora Manuel: all of which I promised should be faithfully and personally delivered.

This promise I was enabled to redeem about three weeks after my return to Cadiz, during which interval of time I had sedulously avoided meeting with Senor Manuel. I approached his country-house one Sunday afternoon with considerable anxiety as to the position, under all circumstances, of the recently wedded couple. I was not long in doubt. The notes of a guitar, accompanying one of the sweetest voices in the world, in one of the most pleasing of the *Romances Moriscos*, to which I had seen the elder Manuel beat enthusiastic time on my first visit to the house of Juan Alvarez, quite satisfied me that the simple graces which had

enthralled the son, had produced their natural effect upon the father, and that I was about to enter a reconciled and happy household. It proved so; and I remained till rather a late hour. Just before leaving, Senor Manuel and I happening to be alone for a few moments, he said quickly and in an under-tone: "Ah, that's right. Business must be remembered, after all. Do you send me to-morrow, my friend, your expense-account to Madrid, you know: I shall pay it, by San Jago! with all my heart!"

"What! as a reward for not telling you who I believed to be the real Constancia de Gonsalvo?"

"Pooh! Katerina is worth all the Gonsalvos in Spain, and a dozen over the market. Here's her health once more, in her absence, eh?—fashion of Englishmen, my boy!"

"With all my heart. Senora Katerina's good health, and the little one's when it comes! Hip, hip! hurra! And now good-night!"

The Romance of Common Life.

No. 5.—HIS BROTHER'S RIVAL.

The pale, anxious face of a dying man, scarcely past the prime of life, looked forth from the casement of a homestead on the sea-skirted shore of Devonshire, just as the evening of a stormy day was falling silently and sadly upon the fading landscape and the vast perturbed Atlantic, over whose distant horizon the sunset clouds still threw a wintry effulgence. A fair young girl stood near the sofa upon which the invalid reclined, vainly striving to dissipate, with broken words of love, the dark fancies of a spirit which stubbornly rebelled against the decree that he knew had irrevocably gone forth. "Nearer—nearer to me!" he faintly murmured, after a long and wistful gaze at the drear and melancholy scene without. "Let me, whilst yet I may, feel

your sweet breath upon my cheek, the warm pressure of your gentle hand in mine. Darkness is falling upon all things, as upon me; but the earth will reawaken in the smile of the new dawn, and again put on her robe of light and flowers, whilst I can scarcely dare to hope that I shall safely ferry over the dark waters which roll between me and the retreating light of life!" As he spoke, a strong gleam of parting sunlight burst upon the wintry view, suddenly and briefly illumining the thick woods and darkening ocean.

"There is still light in Heaven," whispered the weeping girl, as she stooped to kiss the pale forehead of her parent; "and always hope." The dying man gazed with silent earnestness upon the changing scene. The sun set, and a cold, gray tint succeeded; then darkness fell: but presently the solemn stars looked forth, and soon the full, clear moon rose high above the trees, shedding a silver glory over the earth, and throwing a radiant bridge across the dark and troubled waste of waters.

"Truly there is light in Heaven!" murmured the invalid, with a faint smile; "and it may be as you say, Lucy—hope, even for me who have so thoughtlessly, so guiltily misused and squandered the high and precious gift of this brief but great existence!" Presently he added: "But for your sake, dear child, I must no longer dally with the fleeting moments yet remaining to me. Wheel me closer to the fire, and, after listening to a confession I have, I almost fear, too long delayed,

pity, and, if you can, forgive me." Lucy Gaston silently obeyed her father's command; and then, kneeling on an ottoman by his side, and taking his wasted hands in hers, looked up with patient attention and tenderest compassion in his face.

The apartment in which they sat was evidently an artist's working-room. There were numerous finished and unfinished paintings on the walls; and on an easel there was one that, in the imperfect state in which the failing hand of the limner had left it a fortnight previously, was easily seen, even by the imperfect light which now reached it, to be a portrait of Lucy Gaston. The sunny eyes of blue, the wavy, golden hair, the dazzling purity of complexion, the sweet, almost infantine smile which parted the coral lips, were unmistakably hers, transferred in a felicitous moment to the canvas by the artist, to whom it had evidently been a labour of love. He was now about to paint himself: let us hope as faithfully.

"Forty-seven years," he began, "will have passed on the 8th of February next since your father, the first and only surviving child of William and Rachel Gaston, was born at Leeds in Yorkshire. My parents carried on a respectable retail business in that city. I was not only deemed a remarkably handsome boy, but I early displayed extraordinary precocity of intellect; and my proud and indulgent father and mother, with well-meant but injudicious, hurtful kindness, stimulated,

instead of checking, the naturally vain, impulsive, and, as I cannot now conceal from myself, utterly selfish instincts and disposition of the son of their doting love. I was held to possess *genius;* and that my parents, and the foolish people who counselled them, believed all-sufficient in itself to build up greatness, and would only be dwarfed and crippled by the discipline of strict study and close application. Strange, but too common error! As if weeds would not take root in a rich, untended soil, and absorb in their rank luxuriance the energy which, wisely and vigorously directed, might bring forth fruits of worth, and usefulness, and beauty. Especially in drawing and painting I was held to manifest great capacity. I submitted with impatience, and this for no great length of time, to the dry study of the rudimentary rules of art, quite satisfied that being admittedly a genius — ill-understood word!—I needed none of the mechanical aids and appliances necessary only for the dull plodders whose feeble powers required such crutches. My libertine and unguided pencil was held to be especially successful in caricature—in seizing upon the ridiculous, the awkward and absurd, and gibbeting those weaknesses for the amusement of the fools and dastards of our acquaintance. Nothing, as I have sadly proved, is so fatal to the generous development of youth as the habit of satire—of indulgence in puny, malicious sarcasm. It generates a feeling of sneering superiority, a disposition to search out and dwell upon the failings and weak

nesses of people, and gradually induces a disbelief in the existence of either nobleness or talent out of self. It was thus I wasted the golden days of life, and at twenty-one found myself the idol indeed of my parents, but contemned, slighted, shunned, and—my evil disposition exulted in knowing—feared by all the good, the wise, the amiable, to whom the exercise of my reputed talents had made me known. In reality, I was as ignorant and unskilful as I was offensive and vain. A picture on a serious subject, which I had the presumption to send to London for exhibition, was returned with a criticism so humiliating, and yet I felt so entirely, so mercilessly true, as almost to drive me mad. A sharp but brief illness followed, and when I recovered the counsel of a man of sense—to whose advice I had previously listened with lofty contempt—induced me to recommence the study of the rules and principles of art. My father of course yielded to this new caprice. I was sent to the metropolis, and placed in the studio of an eminent master, uncontrolled, save during the hours of instruction and practice, by any other guide than my own fierce will and unbridled passions. My parents, whose faith in my coming and not far-off greatness was illimitable as ever, supplied me freely with money; and the consequence to a vain, impulsive young man thus thrown into that vortex of folly and dissipation, may be easily divined by men of the world, but is not to be dreamed of or guessed at by you, my pure and gentle child. I

worked," continued Mr. Gaston, after moistening his lips with lemonade—"I worked earnestly, but only by fits and starts, and I advanced but slowly in knowledge of my art, compared with the proficiency I speedily acquired in the usages and maxims of a depraved society. Incessant applications for money, under one lying pretext or another—nay, Lucy, it is the right, the only word to use—were received by my parents, and always complied with, though latterly the simple, confiding creatures hinted at difficulties in supplying my increasing wants. This had gone on for several years, till at last a crisis in my life arrived. I was introduced by a well-connected fellow-student, who knew little of my habits, to the house of Captain Austin of the Royal Navy, who, with his unmarried daughter, resided at a pleasant habitation about a mile beyond Hampstead. Caroline, another daughter, had been some months previously married to a Mr. Fanshawe, the presumptive heir to a barony, though not one of the richest in the peerage. I never saw her, but she was reputed to possess the too often fatal gift of beauty in a still higher degree than her sister, your mother, sweet one. You remember your mother, Lucy?"

"Faintly, imperfectly. You know I was not five years old when she was taken from me. Yet often in my dreams I hear a gentle voice, which I know to be hers, calling me by name, and see again her pale, marble face, and beautiful but mournful eyes, bending over me with watchful tenderness"——

"It was I who quenched the joyous light of those sad eyes, and chilled the warm current of eloquent blood that once mantled those pale cheeks," interrupted Mr. Gaston with sad emphasis. "I who—— But I must check this flood of bitter memories, or what I have to say will, I fear, remain unspoken. I fell desperately in love with Lucy Austin; the feeling was mutual; and I ultimately succeeded, well knowing as I did that her father had higher, more ambitious views for her, in inducing her to consent to a private marriage. A few weeks of bewildering happiness fled past on lightning wings; then the thunder burst, and the brief dream was dissolved for ever! Suspicion of what had occurred was communicated to Captain Austin by the student who had introduced me to his house, who at the same time placed in his hands intelligence as yet unknown to me concerning my father. In an agony of apprehension, Captain Austin flew to his daughter's room, broke open her writing-desk, and speedily convinced himself of the truth of his informant's report. His dismay and rage were extreme. Your mother was from home; and upon me, who entered the house a short time after the discovery was made, the first burst of the tempest fell. Every epithet of opprobrium that contempt could invent and hate express was hurled at me. I replied only by a disdainful smile, till Captain Austin threw a newspaper he was holding in his hand towards me, accompanying the act by a few rageful, startling words.

I glanced over it: 'William Gaston, of Leeds, ironmonger, bankrupt.' The words swam before my eyes; my brain reeled, and I staggered blindly out of the house, still pursued by the maledictions of the enraged father. I procured a coach, hastened home, and there found a letter which confirmed the fatal news. William Gaston, whom I had represented to my wife and others as a wealthy merchant, was hopelessly insolvent, unless, indeed, the still deceived, still confiding old man wrote, 'I could sell two or three of the great pictures I had painted;' in which case an arrangement might, he thought, be effected! I raved with frantic passion and remorse, and an impulse to rid myself of shameful life was only checked by the arrival of your mother. Her father had thrust his disobedient child from his door; and she, poor, stricken dove, hastened at once to the haven of her husband's arms, and, deceived as she had been, still whispered in his ears her woman's spells of home, and peace, and love.

"A bleak future was before us," resumed the sick man, as soon as the choking grief which his narrative excited in Lucy Gaston had subsided to a calmer sorrow; "but with persevering, steady effort it would soon have brightened, and every difficulty have been overcome. I, alas! was only capable of fitful, spasmodic exertion: the slightest failure or disappointment chilled and disheartened me. I struggled feebly, because without hope or confidence, and soon

abandoned the contest in despair. My father, by the kindness of his creditors, who greatly respected him, and justly imputed his insolvency to my criminal extravagance, was enabled to recommence business in a small way. He, therefore, and my mother, were so far provided for; but how could I, whispered my selfish heart, burdened by a wife, and soon, possibly, by a numerous family, hope to retrieve the wasted years, and emerge from the slough of poverty in which I was plunged? An unexpected communication enabled me to effect the purpose I brooded over with some show of human feeling. Captain Austin, wearied by the remonstrances of his eldest daughter, who had some time previously become Lady Fanshawe, and mother of the Honourable Caroline Fanshawe, your cousin, caused it to be intimated to us that he would allow my wife two hundred and fifty pounds a year, on condition that she separated from me. Neither he nor Lord Fanshawe, who I believe contributed the largest portion of the money, would hear of assistance being rendered to us on any other terms. I insisted that the offer should be accepted; your mother yielded a compelled assent, and I never saw her more. It is useless," continued Mr. Gaston after a painful interval of silence, "to dwell upon my after-life. Ultimately I reached Italy—Rome, and after a time succeeded in attaining a sufficient degree of excellence as a painter to insure myself a comfortable, or I might say a handsome, subsistence. I was liberally patronised by

British visitors to the Eternal City ; and, had I known that any one belonging to me would have been spared me—that you, Lucy, lived to cheer and bless existence—I might perhaps have in some degree retrieved the crimes and follies of the past, or, at all events, the bitter thought that I am leaving you unprovided for, friendless—your fine nature uncultivated, undeveloped, and exposed, with the rare beauty you inherit from your mother, to a thousand perils you would not, but for that perilous gift, encounter. But I knew it not. I had left no trace of my whereabout; and it was only through the newspapers which I have shown you that I learned the deaths of father, mother, wife, long after they occurred. Your death, in childhood, was, as you know, by some unintelligible mistake, recorded in the same paragraph that announced your mother's: this I believe is still Lord Fanshawe's impression, for Captain Austin survived his daughters, who died within a short time of each other, by a few weeks only. Success had come too late—even for self: my heart was withered, and gradually but surely the springs of life gave way. Weariness of all things beneath the sun had worked itself into the warp and woof of my being, and a melancholy which nothing could cheer or lighten settled heavily upon both heart and brain. In my despair, I sought relief from the discipline and expiatory penances of the Roman Catholic Church—vainly sought it. The pious homilies and exhortations with

which my ghostly counsellors sought to reanimate my bruised and wearied spirit were profitless as bread placed in a dead man's mouth. I was dying, lingeringly and hopelessly, when eight months since a chance meeting with a relative of Captain Austin revealed the probability of your existence. He at least had seen you months after the date of the newspaper paragraph. It was a gleam from Paradise! I hastened home with frantic speed, found, clasped you in my arms, and read the holy and blessed letter of forgiveness, pity, love, which your sainted mother requested should be placed in the wanderer's hands the instant he returned to his abandoned home! But those divine ministerings to a mind diseased came too late; and yet but a few days, hours rather, and I shall have passed to my long home, and you—— Alas! alas!"

The agitation of the invalid drowned his feeble utterance, and for many minutes no sound was heard in the apartment but the quick sobs of the parent and child weeping in each other's arms.

"These worthy people," at length resumed Mr. Gaston; "these Whistons—Susan, as you call her, especially, and her cousin, Mary Crawford—are very kind to you; and with them I think it probable you may always find a home."

"Fear not for that, dear father. Susan and her cousin Mary have been sisters to me; fond, proud, anxious sisters from my earliest remembrance."

"Ay! He has tempered the wind to the shorn lamb. But still the time may come when even Susan's friendship will fail or"——

"Never!" exclaimed Lucy Gaston.

"Or not suffice, I should rather say. For this reason it is that I request your heedful attention to what I am now about to say. Your cousin, the Honourable Caroline Fanshawe, bears a gentle reputation, and holds, I have heard, her mother's memory in great reverence. Several of that mother's kind, sympathising letters to her less fortunate sister, you will find in my writing-desk, enclosed, with an explanatory note from me, in an envelope directed to Lord Fanshawe. You will, should you need counsel or assistance, forward that parcel to its address—or indeed immediately I am gone; for the society of these Whistons, kind and worthy as"——

A gentle knock at the door interrupted him. It was Mrs. Whiston, Susan, to say that a priest—a Roman, hesitated the young woman, as if announcing some terrific personage—was below. "He came," she added, "on horseback, and says he was sent for."

"Quite right," said Mr. Gaston with a sad, feeble smile. "Ask him to walk up. Kiss me, Lucy. I will ring for you soon after this visitor is gone."

The priest had left Vale Farm, after a long interview with his penitent, for more than half an hour, when Lucy Gaston, surprised and impatient at not being summoned, softly entered her father's apart-

ment, who, she concluded, must have fallen asleep. His attitude, and the long wicks of the candles placed on a low table by his side, confirmed this impression. The light of the candles shining full upon the sleeper's face, as he lay calmly reclined upon the couch, gave it, she thought, an unearthly pallor, and she noiselessly approached to remove them. Gently she bent down over that erring, but oh! how fondly, freely-forgiven parent! Her warm lip touched his; instantly a piercing scream ran through the house, and Lucy Gaston was found a minute afterwards by Mrs. Whiston and Mary Crawford, fainting and almost insensible, upon the dead body of her father, which she wildly clasped.

Mr. Gaston, in compliance with his own earnest request, was buried in the Catholic chapel of the neighbouring town, in a tomb excavated in front of the sanctuary. The funeral, perhaps for effect, took place on the evening of the sixth day after his decease, and the building was crowded by persons attracted by the unusual ceremony. The novel and imposing service, the profusion of lights, the perfume of the incense, the deep tones of the organ, fitfully broken and relieved by the choral wailings, the exulting bursts, of the mass of requiem, and at intervals by the lone, solemn voice of the officiating priest, combined with the heat of the atmosphere, proved too much for Lucy Gaston, and she would have fainted but for the pungent essences which Mary Crawford, who, with Mr.

and Mrs. Whiston, accompanied her, plentifully administered. Her bonnet and veil had been removed, and she had partially recovered, when the lowering of the coffin to its final resting-place caught her attention. She sprang impulsively forward, threw herself on her knees beside the grave, and with clasped hands and streaming eyes ejaculated a fervent prayer to God, quite unconscious of the profound sympathy and admiration which her attitude and seraph countenance, strongly illumined by the lights of the sanctuary, and mantled with a profusion of golden hair, excited in the hushed and crowded auditory. Mary Crawford recalled her by a whisper to a sense of her position. She rose hurriedly to her feet, shrank back out of sight behind her friends; and the ceremony soon afterwards terminated.

Amongst the number of the curious whom the pomp of the service had attracted to the chapel, were two gentlemen whose dress and carriage marked them to be persons of condition. One, the eldest, might be about six-and-twenty years of age; the other was perhaps three years younger. They were brothers; but there was a striking difference in their personal appearance. The eldest was fair-complexioned and light-haired, and, though handsome, had somewhat of an effeminate look. The younger gentleman's complexion, cast of features, and dark, brilliant eyes, intimated a mixture of more southern blood; and his

figure, though elegantly formed as that of his brother, was more vigorously knit together.

"She is the daughter of the man to whom they have been paying such extraordinary funeral honours," said the youngest of these gentlemen, rejoining his brother, whom he had quitted for a few minutes on leaving the chapel. "Miss Lucy Gayton, or Gaston: her father was a painter, and her abode is at Vale Farm, distant from this town about five miles."

"Did you ever, Sigismund, see so angelic a countenance?" asked the elder brother as they walked on.

"Humph! Yes, Arthur: that of the superb Caroline is, I think, superior, though certainly of quite another order of beauty."

"Quite. And what a softening charm the eloquent sorrow of the eyes threw over that beautiful face!"

"True," replied the gentleman addressed as Sigismund, in a tone slightly *moqueur*. "An effect similar to that produced on the Queen of Flowers—

——— 'When o'er the rose
A veil of moss the angel throws.'

But come, here is the carriage; let us away, or Marion will wonder what has become of us."

These young men, brothers of Sir Edward Temple, Baronet, of Grosvenor-square, and Temple House, Somersetshire, were on a visit to their sister, Marion Temple, who usually resided during the winter months

in Devonshire for the benefit its mild climate and temperature afforded her delicate health. She was staying with the family of the Rev. John Benton, and an hour's smart drive brought them to the venerable rector's door. They both returned to London a few days after Mr. Gaston's funeral; and any further inquiries Mr. Arthur Temple might feel disposed to make respecting the beautiful vision of the chapel were necessarily postponed to a future and more convenient time.

The seasons in their change flew past. Spring had once more strewed the earth with flowers; summer laughed amidst the streams, and fields, and woods; autumn yielded her rich harvests to the sickle; and rough honest winter, with his no less genial frosts and snows, was again rapidly approaching. No incident of any importance had occurred during this varied miracle at Vale Farm. Lucy Gaston still dwelt with her attached friends. How, indeed, was it possible she could think of leaving Susan? Susan, who had been her playmate, protectress, friend from childhood —Susan, who had positively refused to marry honest, good-tempered, excellent John Whiston, the owner of more than three hundred acres of arable and pasture land, amply stocked and in high cultivation, unless it was distinctly understood that dear Lucy should be considered as absolutely one of the family. Leave her and Mary Crawford for her grand cousin, the Honour-

able Caroline Fanshawe, even supposing, which was not at all likely, she would be willing to receive her—impossible! All parties concurred in this view of the case; and it was unanimously agreed that the notion of Lucy Gaston leaving Vale Farm, except, indeed, as the wife of a nobleman, or rich squire at the very least, was altogether ridiculous and absurd.

The marriage of the beautiful orphan, if not with a positive nobleman or landed squire, with a young, handsome, rich, fashionable gentleman, became, as the year waned, a settled conclusion. Mr. Arthur Smythe, who had been lingering for several weeks about the farm under the pretence of shooting, and whose manners were so elegant and gentlemanly, had at last proposed for Lucy's hand, and been blushingly accepted. Honest John Whiston satisfied himself that Mr. Smythe possessed an income of fifteen hundred a year, derived from the funds; no possible objection could therefore, he thought, be made to the match; and preparations for the wedding immediately commenced. It was also agreed, although Mr. Smythe had yielded the point with manifest reluctance, that Mary Crawford should accompany Lucy, and live with her as companion for, at all events, the first twelve month; and Lucy promised to visit Vale Farm at least twice a year; so that the separation would, after all, Mrs. Whiston strove to persuade herself, be only partial; a hope her more keen-sighted cousin did not share. Mr. Smythe would, *she* believed, gradually

withdraw his wife from all intercourse with her country friends. Mary Crawford, however, kept her opinions to herself. Mr. Smythe was beloved of Lucy, and her own perhaps unreasonable suspicions and half-dislike of the bridegroom went for nothing, and ought not, she felt, to be expressed.

Yes, the graceful manners, the refined homage, the honied accents of the youthful and handsome sportsman, had kindled into life and form the hidden mystery of love, sleeping till then in the pure depths of Lucy's calm and gentle spirit. Was he capable of appreciating the priceless treasure thus revealed, and awaiting his acceptance; or would he, with man's careless vanity and disdainful caprice, look with indifference upon the prize which perchance the eagerness and fervour of pursuit had merely invested with an adventitious and temporary charm? Momentous questions these, that would have instantly arisen in the minds of a father or mother, quicksighted to the workings of human passion, and conversant with the ways of men and of the world! Lucy Gaston had lost those guides; and she had no other counsellor or guardian than her native purity of heart, her gentle dignity of unsuspecting innocence, her innate pride of maidenly reserve—celestial visitants! and all-potent too—on the one perilous condition that they are so intimately associated with, and regardful of their votary and exemplar, as never to be careless of their charge, or slumber for an instant at their posts! It

proved so with Lucy Gaston; and, however light or trivial the motive which first induced Mr. Arthur Smythe to while away the unheeded hours in the society of the young rustic beauty, he ultimately became enthralled to a degree he had not perhaps imagined to be possible; and the result, as I have stated, was the offer of his hand to the humble, unportioned maiden, and its grateful, blushing acceptance.

Marion Temple had returned with the fall of the year to Devonshire, and again taken up her abode at the Rev. Mr. Benton's, distant about eleven miles from Vale Farm. Her brother, Mr. Arthur Temple, accompanied her; and, about a week previous to the day named for Lucy Gaston's union with Mr. Smythe, Mr. Sigismund Temple arrived on a flying visit to his relatives. After a sojourn of two days only, the newcomer announced his intention of returning at once to London. He was, Marion Temple saw, deeply offended with his brother Arthur, who, for some reason studiously concealed from her, had peremptorily refused Sigismund's earnest request that he would accompany him back to town.

"Idiot!" mentally soliloquised Sigismund Temple, whilst waiting on the morning of his departure for his brother's appearance in the breakfast-room of the rectory—"Idiot! And yet his headstrong folly concerns me but in a remote, improbable contingency. I would, however, he did not marry just yet. The fatal taint which Sir Edward has, it is thought, in-

herited from their mother—Marion too, I fear, is doomed—lurks very probably in his veins; but, should he have issue by this marriage, my hopes—hopes did I say?" continued the young man, with an audible outburst of remorseful grief, as he rose from his chair, and paced agitatedly to and fro the apartment—"hopes! Is Nature's milk so turned to gall within me that I *hope* for the deaths of brothers whom I loved so well till I knew that the unjust and cruel laws of entail and primogeniture had beggared me to enrich them—in succession enrich them—for Edward, I think, already stands on the verge of the grave! Alas! it is but too true. I should lie to my own heart if I denied it; but is the blame mine? After all," he presently added in a calmer mood, "they are but my half-brothers: they have no share in the vigorous maternal life which"——

A distant step arrested the current of his thoughts, and when Arthur Temple entered he had resumed the listless, sardonic attitude and expression which he usually exhibited. After a few words on indifferent subjects, Sigismund Temple again endeavoured to dissuade his brother from the rash step he was contemplating. It was labour thrown away: he could not make the slightest impression, with all his subtlety and sarcasm.

"Well," he said, "if Wilful must to water, Wilful must drench; but I again repeat, that if I were Arthur Temple, with only one frail life between me

and an ancient and wealthy baronetcy, it should be something more than a pretty face that would tempt me into the noose of matrimony."

"Pretty face! I tell you, Sigismund, that Lucy Gaston is one of the gentlest, purest, most charming and beautiful of women, and no more ambitious of wealth or station than of a convent. She would have accepted my offer had I been poor and dependent as joyfully as now."

"Arthur, you are a—— But I forbear; it is, I know, useless arguing with a man labouring under the insanity of passion. You are preparing a future of misery not only for yourself but for this poor girl. Before twelve months are past the refined elegance and courtly grace of such women as Lady Alice Merivale will return upon your imagination with a brilliancy and power infinitely heightened by contrast with the mindless rustic who has temporarily caught your fancy; and you will bitterly as vainly repent your present mad infatuation."

"That woman, Sigismund, is an incarnation of mere worldliness. She has neither heart nor soul."

"As you please; but she has at least a charming person, and a sparkling, cultivated wit; and to me it appears rather a proof of good sense than necessarily of heartlessness that she some two years since looked coldly upon the advances of a young gentleman who, unless his elder brother dies without male issue, is condemned to vegetate upon a poor fifteen hundred a year.

Perhaps," added the speaker, looking keenly in his brother's face, and speaking in a low and meaning tone—"perhaps, had Sir Edward's health been at that time in the fragile state in which it is now feared to be, the lady would have been less reserved and cruel."

"It is useless, Sigismund, to recall such memories they have died within me, and so have the pulses of ambition. With the beautiful and ductile creature with whom my fate will shortly be united I shall calmly glide down the stream of life, undisturbed by and heedless of the jostlings, the puerile distinctions of a world for which I feel neither sympathy nor respect."

"A dream, Arthur—a silly, womanish dream, to be followed, be sure of it, by a very bitter awakening. But enough: we part friends, I hope?"

"You persist in not remaining then?"

"Certainly. I should only involve myself, without in the slightest degree serving you, were I present at the ceremony."

"I do not comprehend your meaning."

"It is nevertheless plain enough, if not to you, whose head is amongst the stars, or rather clouds, to me, whose attention is necessarily fixed on mundane things. You, at least, are independent of Sir Edward Temple to the extent of fifteen hundred a year; and, if the elder obstacle were to precede you to the world of shadows"——

"Shame on you, Sigismund!"

"Be it so: I am at all events no hypocrite; and this system of beggaring every child but one in order to maintain what is called family dignity, is scarcely one adapted to cultivate fraternal affection. You, I repeat, have a revenue, though perhaps an insufficient one, whilst I unfortunately have no dependence save on the parliamentary and social influence of the present head of the House of Temple to quarter me in an eligible manner upon the public revenues. You know Sir Edward's pride of birth and ancestry, and cannot therefore be blind to the folly I should commit by in any manner appearing to forward or countenance a *mésalliance* the discovery of which will so terribly enrage him; and he may, spite of appearances, live many years yet. Besides," added Sigismund Temple, after a few moments' silence, and with an exaggeration of his usual sardonic sneer, "the fewer the witnesses to the ceremony the better, perhaps; and it may be so esteemed by you some of these days. The retention of the name of Smythe, too, will be well."

"The assumption of the name of Smythe was an accident—a caprice without motive; and I shall probably reassume my own"——

"You had better not. Take my advice in this, at least."

"Sigismund, envy and discontent have not only soured your once frank and joyous temper, but perverted your sense of right and wrong."

"Say rather, brother mine, that they have in a

slight degree sharpened my wits. Younger brothers are necessarily somewhat precocious. It is only your elder born who can afford to remain fools *en permanence!* Good-bye; I shall at all events keep your secret." The brothers shook hands, and Sigismund Temple was soon on his way back to London.

Arthur Temple remained for a considerable time after his brother had left the apartment where the foregoing colloquy took place in a state of profound meditation. "Smythe!—Temple!" he at last audibly murmured—"What is there, after all, in a name? The one will do to conjure with as well as the other; and after all, as Sigismund says—— At all events, I am very slightly indebted, and owe but scant allegiance to the proud family name. The fifteen hundred a year which I inherit descends from my mother; and yet I have often thought how delightful it would be to witness Lucy's sweet, artless expression of grateful wonderment when informed that she was about to marry into the distinguished family of the Temples—to be sister-in-law to the magnificent Sir Edward Temple, whose grand fêtes and splendid entertainments sometimes afford a paragraph to the county paper! Yet that would not be prudent! We must, as we value peace of mind, contentment of heart, shun comparisons of our state with his. Better to draw a veil before the grandeur, be it even that of a brother, that would but mock our own comparatively poor means of life. Yes! I will certainly take Sigismund's advice in this one in-

stance: the name of Smythe, which I carelessly, capriciously assumed, shall be retained, unless, indeed"—— The young man's face flushed crimson; he hurriedly rose and walked to and fro the room, as if the quick pulsation of his veins forbade for the moment repose or immobility of body—"unless, indeed, Sigismund's insinuation, that Sir Edward's health is fatally undermined should prove well founded: then, indeed, to salute my beautiful Lucy as *Lady* Temple—as the mistress of Temple House—of the mansion in Grosvenor-square—as the wife of a baronet of ancient descent and princely wealth—that indeed were a proud moment in both our lives—that would be—— God of Heaven!" added the conscience-struck young man, his voice suddenly falling to a trembling whisper—"am I, too, an eager speculator in the chances of a dear brother's death?—do *I* count grudgingly the sands of life allotted to a son born of the same mother as myself?—have the words of Sigismund but wakened an echo slumbering in my own heart—but swept away the illusive colouring from the mirror in which I before glassed myself, and shown me my *true* self? Terrible questions, which I know not how to answer!" He ceased to speak, and shudderingly covered his face with his hands, as if he would shut out the appalling, self-revealing spectre which dimly flitted past. It was some time before he perfectly recovered his usual calmness: when he had done so, his thoughts appeared to gradually fall into the channel they had first taken

on his brother Sigismund's departure; and, by the slight interjectional comments which escaped him, he was evidently again pondering the expediency of revealing his true name and condition to his promised bride. The decision arrived at was that suggested by his brother; for, as he left the apartment to rejoin his sister Marion, he muttered: "Yes; Smythe let it be—for the present at all events. I can, should occasion arise, easily reassume my proper designation; whereas —— But *au jour le jour.*"

On the appointed day Arthur Temple was accordingly married to Lucy Gaston in the name of Smythe. Immediately after the ceremony the newly-wedded pair set off for Holly Lodge, three or four miles out of Bath, accompanied by Mary Crawford and John Robson, Mr. Temple's groom, who, with Mr. and Mrs. Whiston, had witnessed the ceremony.

Sigismund Temple arrived in Grosvenor-square in barely sufficient time for dinner, to which a small but distinguished party had been invited. The Honourable Caroline Fanshawe, young, amiable, and of dazzling beauty and imperial presence, was there, accompanied by her father Lord Fanshawe. The queenly head, set magnificently upon brilliant shoulders from which the Roman purple might be fitly draped, the exquisitely chiselled nose and mouth, the lustrous purity of her complexion, the splendour of her fine dark eyes, the wavy luxuriance of her glossy hair, her finely-moulded

person and regal carriage, formed a royalty of beauty which compelled the homage of the surprised beholder as to a being of diviner attributes than belong to earth. This lady Sigismund Temple had frequently met, but had lately resolved to shun, as a person dangerous to his peace—he, a younger brother, and she, highly connected, but by no means rich—for the Fanshawe estates, strictly entailed on heirs male, went, at her father's death, to a nephew—and, as he thought, as aspiringly ambitious as himself. On this evening, however, she, on his appearance in the drawing-room considerably before the other gentlemen, manifested a graciousness of demeanour before which his prudent resolves vanished like morning mist before the sun. Fascinated, intoxicated by smiles which played like summer lightning about his heart and brain, and the rich caressing tones of her magical voice, he yielded unresistingly to the witching influence he had wisely determined to avoid; and it was with a feeling almost of resentment that he found himself interrupted in his perilous *tête-à-tête* by the entrance of Sir Edward Temple, Lord Fanshawe, and other gentlemen from the dining-room.

Sir Edward, who, I may remark, was an eminently handsome, as well as a very honourable, well-meaning man, appeared in jocund spirits. He looked somewhat pale and delicate, but he had been for several weeks free from pain; and his physician had not only pronounced him convalescent, but had intimated a rather

positive opinion, that, should no untoward change occur, which he did not anticipate, the tendency which had been feared towards consumption was effectually arrested. Agitation must, however, he declared, be strictly avoided, or fatal and immediate consequences would in all probability result. The character of Sir Edward's illness was known only to his medical adviser, and partially by his brothers. The outer world only knew that he had been ailing somewhat, and was now essentially recovered. Sir Edward, who, as much as possible, closed his own eyes to the danger in which he stood, would have resented as an unpardonable offence any report that he inherited his mother's fatal malady.

The baronet approached Miss Fanshawe, and the pulsation of Sigismund Temple's heart was momently arrested, as he observed the smiles which he had for the last half-hour monopolised, bestowed with even yet more playfully caressing charm upon his elder brother. Sir Edward felt their influence, and his countenance lightened with unusual gaiety and joy.

"I do not know," he said, "when I have felt so light of heart. One—certainly not the especial reason which lifts me above the earth"—the brief glance of mutual intelligence did not escape Sigismund Temple—"but one cause of the exultation I feel is the excellent report Sigismund gives of Marion's health. It is a foolish fancy, or superstition, certainly," added the baronet in a slightly disturbed tone, "but the belief clings to me —partly, perhaps, because we are thought to so much

resemble each other, or because we have been till lately so constantly together—that our lives are bound up with each other, and will end together."

"Surely a very absurd fancy," remarked Miss Fanshawe.

"Yes; one cannot reason upon it. You remember the German astrologer, Sigismund?"

"The German cheat and swindler, you mean."

"It may be so. And yet, for all that reason or philosophy may urge, I cannot help feeling rejoiced, for my own sake as well as that of Marion, that she is recovering."

The lady glanced towards Sigismund, and he thought a faintly ironical smile curled her beautiful lip, as she said: "And, pray, what may have been the precise text of the astrologer or cheat's prediction?"

"The usual jargon," replied Sigismund Temple, rising as he spoke. "The lines of life in Marion and Sir Edward resembled each other, ending I think in the same house, or some such gibberish."

"That is a prophecy which, under certain circumstances, might realise itself," observed Miss Fanshawe; and a shade of anxiety or concern passed over her brilliant countenance.

"I trust not," said Sir Edward Temple, with a proud and grateful smile; "but this is not a time for such themes. Shall we have a little music? Perhaps you, Caroline, will again favour us with the charming melody you sang the other evening?"

Miss Fanshawe rose in compliance with the baronet's request, and Sir Edward led her to the piano.

"Caroline!" muttered Sigismund Temple, with white, quivering lips—"Caroline! This, then, is the meaning of her condescending graciousness. Everything is his—imperial beauty, princely wealth, whilst I"——

The tones of the singer's fine contr'alto voice broke in upon his bitter musings. He permitted himself to drink in a few bars of the entrancing strain, and then, as if fearful of trusting himself longer there, hastily left the apartment, and did not return during the evening.

The brothers again met on the following day at dinner. They were alone; and when the servants had retired Sir Edward, breaking a pause of some duration, said abruptly: "Caroline—— What is the matter, Sigismund? You quite startle one."

"Nothing—nothing! A slight spasm; nothing more."

"Where, dear Sigismund?" inquired the baronet anxiously. "On the left side? It is there I frequently—not now, but some time ago—felt such attacks, and Dr. Bailey thought gravely of them. You should consult him: he will be here in the morning."

"It is nothing, Edward; proceed."

"Caroline—Miss Fanshawe, I was about to say,

felt surprised at your abrupt departure yesterday evening."

"Indeed!"

"And still more so that I had not informed you of our engagement. That pain again, Sigismund? you are suffering terribly. I will instantly send for Dr. Bailey." The baronet rose to touch the bell.

"No, no; do not. It is passed already; go on."

"She imagined you had known of my proposal and its acceptance. But you have been absent during the last week, and I saw you but for a few minutes before dinner yesterday. The marriage will not take place just yet: about May or June next, Lord Fanshawe suggests; and by that time, I doubt not, all fear of a relapse of ill health will be past."

"Damnation! how hot and close the room is!" fiercely exclaimed Sigismund Temple, abruptly rising and throwing up one of the sashes. "One can scarcely breathe in it."

"Hot and close in January!" said Sir Edward. "What are you talking about?"

His brother muttered an unintelligible reply, and left the room.

"He is certainly ill," thought the baronet; "and, if not better in the morning, Bailey *shall* see him."

Holly Lodge, which Arthur Temple had prepared for the reception of his wife, was a convenient and pleasantly-situated house; and its equipment and em-

bellishments, though excessively plain and simple in the eyes of the husband, accustomed to the gorgeous furniture and decorations of his paternal home, were magnificent in the estimation of the delighted bride, who saw, in the various articles of elegance and luxury with which the miniature drawing-room and her sleeping and dressing chambers were profusely filled, new proofs of the devoted affection which had raised her to such an unimagined height of grandeur. The simplest child, not only in knowledge of the world, but in the arts by which beauty enhances its value and secures its conquests, was this singularly beautiful girl. Her almost infantine delight in the novelty of her position, in the fairy treasures by which she was surrounded, and in the presence of her almost idolised husband, was intense, unbounded; and it was many days before a shadow, a light, evanescent shadow, flitted past and for a moment dimmed the young morning of her joy. One afternoon Mary Crawford found her standing before a high cheval mirror, which reflected her charming person at full length.

"Do you think, Mary," she said, and there was a tone of inexpressible sadness in the gentle voice, "that Arthur, my husband, will one day love me less than he does now?"

The question struck a painful chord in the more observant Mary Crawford's bosom, and the sudden vibration prevented her from instantly replying.

Lucy looked anxiously in her face. "You do not speak?" she said.

"Is not that a sufficient answer?" said Mary Crawford, recovering her presence of mind, and pointing to the image in the glass.

"I was just then thinking, Mary," was the reply, as the young wife redirected her glance to the mirror, "that he must always love me."

There was not the slightest conceit or vanity in the thought which suggested this remark. Poor girl! she was but examining the strength and brightness of the chain by which alone she felt she had compelled her husband's affections, and could alone hope to retain them. Mary Crawford kissed the blushing cheek, led her beloved friend and *protégée* to a chair, took a seat beside her, and, passing with old familiarity one arm round her waist, said: "And what, dear Lucy, has occurred to put such strange thoughts into your head?"

"Nothing—nothing, Mary dear," was the reply, though a faint sigh bubbled up and exhaled with the words. "Nothing of moment; Arthur has been reading to me, and—and"——

"What, dearest?"

"I do not, you know, Mary, quite understand the grand poetry he so delights to read; but I love to listen to his voice; and to-day especially it seemed a silver, lulling melody, like the murmured music of a

brook amidst the trees, and with its harmony I—I fell asleep."

"And your husband was angry?"

"No, Mary, not angry—vexed, that's all; and he is gone out alone."

Mary Crawford, with an affectation of cheerfulness she did not feel, strove to laugh off the half-formed apprehensions of the ill-mated wife, and for the time succeeded.

The golden dawn, the purple light of love, which, in the imagination of Mr. Temple, had for a brief space transformed the charming, gentle, but untutored country girl into a divinity, before which he would be well content to sacrifice the pleasures, honours, and rewards of the world in which he was born, and a high place in which he believed himself, with the aid of his influential relatives, able easily to attain, had gradually vanished before the chilling influence of familiarity, the sober teachings of disenchanting possession. His brother's prophecy had been accomplished even before the time he had assigned for its fulfilment. As unjust now as blindly infatuated before, Arthur Temple could find no charm, no solace, in the meek gentleness, the patient submission, the devoted affection, of the trusting woman he had sworn to love and cherish. Her simplicity wearied—her ignorance disgusted—her silent reproaches irritated and enraged him. He execrated the fetters in which he had madly bound himself, and each succeeding day but added

to their galling, maddening pressure. His unfortunate wife had not been long able to conceal from herself that she was already, in the first blush and prime of wedded life, a widow in the saddest, most grievous acceptation of the word—estranged from her husband's affections, divorced from his future and his hopes, and her heart sank within her. But for the blushing hope, the tremulous vision, daily more intense and vivid, of a beauteous pledge of renewed love and peace, she must, she thought, have died. It came; and with it joy and hope, rekindling the faded roses of her cheeks, and rendering back her old gaiety of heart, her trustful tenderness for the father, forgiven in his son. Mr. Temple seemed at first moved, softened, by the divine gift; but a few days sufficed to weaken, a few weeks to obliterate, the impression, and his manner to his wife became cold, disdainful, repulsive as before.

I will not dwell further on the cruel incidents of this most unhappy marriage. A year had passed; it was once more January, when Mr. Temple received a letter from his brother Sigismund, written at Sir Edward Temple's instance, to request his presence at the celebration of the baronet's nuptials, so long delayed, with the Honourable Caroline Fanshawe. The note was brief and curt, and appeared to have been hurriedly and negligently scrawled. A postscriptum stated that Sir Edward was still ignorant of the *mésalliance* he, Arthur Temple, had formed.

The resolution long meditated by Mr. Temple was, upon the receipt of this intelligence, at once adopted. An hour after it had been received, Mary Crawford, who for a long time had been the medium through which the wishes and commands of the husband had been conveyed to his wife, was summoned to attend Mr. Temple in the front apartment of the ground-floor.

"I am about to leave this place," began Mr. Temple; "and it is not likely that I shall very soon return."

"Will your absence be much longer than usual?" inquired his auditor, observing that he hesitated. Mr. Temple's very frequent absences at Bath and other places had usually averaged about ten days.

"Much longer: indeed, I intend breaking up this establishment, and it is extremely improbable, therefore, that I shall *ever* return."

"Merciful God! Why, what do you mean, Mr. Smythe? You cannot intend to desert your wife—your child? No, no; it is impossible. You cannot be so base!"

"Have the goodness to remember to whom you are addressing yourself," said Mr. Temple in his haughtiest tone and manner. He presently added: "It must have been for a long time clearly apparent to you that your friend Lucy and I are not suited to each other; that our tastes, feelings, associations, render us totally unfit for each other's society. This at least I have long and bitterly felt, and I have therefore

determined, and as much for her happiness as my own, to leave her, and for ever."

"Oh say not so—say not so!" exclaimed Mary Crawford with passionate entreaty. "The blow will kill her. Be patient but for a few months, perhaps weeks: her health is gone, and she will not, I fear, trouble any one long. Be merciful—patient—till the grave has received her body, and the blighted spirit has returned to Him who gave it!"

Whatever emotion of remorse the husband might have felt, he effectually mastered and concealed. "It is useless to waste words," he said; "my purpose cannot be shaken"——

"Hark!" suddenly exclaimed Mary Crawford: "I surely heard Lucy's step! And yet I left her asleep—such broken sleep, at least, as lately has been hers." She took a candle from the table, and stepped swiftly but softly to the door. There was no one on the stairs, or in the passage. She did not think of looking into the adjoining room, separated only from the front apartment by slight folding-doors.

"I was mistaken," said Mary Crawford, re-entering the room, and placing the candle on the table. "Now, sir, proceed; and speak, if you please, as softly as may suffice for the due enforcement of your brave and honest purpose."

"There need little more be said at present," rejoined Mr. Temple. "I shall write in a day or two, and fully explain my views and intentions. In the meantime—

and this is the most painful part of the affair—you must prepare Mrs. Smythe as gently as you can to give up my son, who—— Ha! What's that? Did you hear nothing?"

"I thought I did: a stifled scream or sob it seemed." Mary Crawford stepped once more to the door, and looked out. Nobody was there. "Go on," she said; "no one hears you—but God!"

"I have nothing more to observe," he replied. "A properly-authorised agent will be here in a few days, who will wind up and dispose of this establishment. Mrs. Smythe will reside where she pleases, and of course will receive a sufficient sum to support her comfortably."

"You carry this matter with a high hand, Mr. Smythe, and your unfortunate wife must, I suppose, resign herself as she best can to your cruel will. But at least you will, I trust, inform us who and what are the family into which Lucy Gaston has so unhappily intruded—a subject you have always carefully avoided. This, in common justice, you are bound to do; else, death overtaking you, your wife will be without resource, or claim, or kindred."

Mr. Temple smiled, and said so very improbable a contingency would be duly provided for. "I have no further time to spare," he added, "as I wish to leave Bath by the mail-train, and must therefore bid you at once good-bye."

"Then go, sir!" replied Mary Crawford with

wrathful vehemence; "and may He in whose temple you uttered the vows you have wantonly and infamously broken, avenge"——

"No—no—no!" burst convulsively from the lips of the abandoned wife, who, clad in her night-dress, and pale as marble, tottered through the folding-doors, and threw herself upon Mary Crawford's neck. "Do not—do not curse him, Mary, for *my* sake!"

Mr. Temple was painfully affected. He hoped to have avoided an interview with his wife, whom he could not but pity and respect, cold and dead towards her as his selfish affections had become. He knew not what to say; and a silence, save for the suffocating sobs of the two females, prevailed for several minutes.

At length Mr. Temple said: "I was anxious, Lucy"——

"Leave me—leave me, sir!" hurriedly, almost fiercely interrupted his wife, her face still averted from him. Go—begone! We are true and honest people, sir; and remember we do not want your money. Go—go! I would not that she cursed you, but begone!" And, without turning her head, she waved him impatiently with her hand towards the door.

Mr. Temple hesitated for an instant, and then, resolutely nerving himself to go through with his predetermined purpose, left the apartment, and a few minutes afterwards the house.

"He is gone!" exclaimed the wife, erecting herself from the bent, listening attitude she had assumed.

"He is gone; and now to bed. We may be overheard here. You heard him say," she added, sinking her voice to a deep whisper, "that he would have my child. We will disappoint him, Mary! God has just shown me how! Come—come—come!"

A terrible suspicion of Lucy's sanity, as these words, accompanied by a wild, triumphant expression of countenance, fell from her, arose in Mary Crawford's mind. She, however, yielded to the bereaved wife's example and earnestly-whispered injunction, and softly, softly ascended the carpeted stairs on tiptoe. Whatever project had glanced across the mother's brain remained undivulged, or at least unfulfilled, for delirium rapidly supervened; and before a physician, hastily summoned from Bath, arrived, Mrs. Smythe—Temple, I should say—was in a raging fever.

Mr. Arthur Temple had quite recovered his equanimity when he stepped, at the Bath station, into a first-class carriage of the mail-train; and, as he was whirled along, he amused himself by calculating the chances and probabilities of the new life he had marked out for himself—one of politics, of active ambition, resulting in office, honours, substantial rewards—when a sudden crash, a cry of terror and despair, an overwhelming sense of dismay and horror, flashed upon him; and he remembered nothing more till he found himself in one of the gorgeous bedrooms of his brother's house in Grosvenor-square. The collision of the train with a luggage-truck near the Reading station had resulted

in the instantaneous loss of several lives, and such severe internal injuries to Mr. Temple that saving his life was out of the question. Robson, who travelled with him, was unhurt, and had caused his master to be brought immediately to London.

Fortunately Dr. Bailey happened to be in Grosvenor-square when the sufferer arrived; and the intelligence was consequently broken gradually and skilfully to Sir Edward Temple. Even thus communicated, it produced a very distressing effect, and but for prompt appliances might have proved fatal. The baronet was immediately confined to his bed, and never saw his brother again in life, communicating only with him through Sigismund Temple.

The first thought of the younger brother, on ascertaining the fatal nature of the accident that had befallen Arthur Temple, was that Sir Edward's marriage would be necessarily deferred—he hoped for ever. A natural emotion of compassion succeeded, soon chased away by the thronging hopes his eager imagination conjured up. The dazzling Caroline! abundant wealth! —all this might now be his! Who knew?

For several days Arthur Temple writhed and tossed upon his bed of down—the mild eyes, the kind voice, the gentle, sympathising hand-pressure of his abandoned wife revisiting him in his troubled, fevered dreams, only to mock him as with the mirage. At last the grim Tyrant passed through the closed and muffled portals of the splendid mansion, glided up the

grand staircase, and entered the gorgeous chamber. Dr. Bailey and Sigismund Temple were in the room when the shadow of the viewless victor fell upon the sick man's face. The physician observed the sign, and knew its meaning. He placed his fingers on the patient's pulse: it fluttered—sank—stopped; then came a brief rally, and all was over!

A few hours after this solemn event, Sigismund Temple was sitting alone in his dressing-room, with a foolscap sheet of paper closely written upon, held loosely and carelessly in his right hand. His dark eyes were unusually vivid, and on his pale, expressive face a practised observer might have read strange matters. "Deathbed repentances!" exclaimed the excited young man in a strange, low, beating voice—"deathbed repentances, I have heard bishops preach, are seldom of any value—rarely do much to repair the errors, sins, or crimes of a life. It would not be seemly," he added, whilst a bitter sneer curled his white, finely-chiselled lips—"it would not be seemly that Arthur's tardy generosity or justice—exercised at my expense, too, which makes it all the more pleasant—so suddenly resuscitated by the near view of a tomb yawning for himself, should, through my instrumentality especially, be made to give the lie to so salutary and grave a maxim. This paper now," he resumed, after a brief pause, "written by me at his dictation, not only deprives me of fifteen hundred pounds per annum which I else inherit—that, however, were no-

thing, should another frail life fall in—and reveals the existence of the now widowed wife, but that of the son, the presumptive heir to the baronetcy, with its attendant wealth. It is therein the serpent-danger lies, which I must crush—crush—crush—at any hazard"—as he thus spoke, he fiercely crumpled up the paper in his hands, as if at the moment he grasped the menaced peril by the throat—"at any sacrifice! It was fortunate," he soon more calmly continued—"it was fortunate Bailey came in too late to witness the signing of the paper, or even to hear it spoken of. My good brother evidently, at the last moment—thank Fortune, not before—doubted my good faith; but Bailey could not read aright, as I plainly did, that last glance of agonizing remorse, doubt, and entreaty. So far, then, I am safe. Let me again," said he, smoothing the paper carefully out—"let me again peruse the precious document:—'In the name of God, Amen.' It is really wonderful," continued Sigismund Temple with a mocking laugh—"it is really wonderful how the illusions and dreams of childhood revisit men in their last hours! The bishops are quite right. The only valid faith is that of the pious believer, who recognises God in life. In death, He is, if there be one, sure to be self-revealed, and acknowledgment is puerile—absurd—not to say impious. "This name," went on the sneering scoffer—"this name, thus used, confers then no character of sacredness upon the paper! But let me read on:—'I give and bequeath unto my

beloved wife'—— Beloved wife! Why, this is mockery *upon* mockery! He surprised her affections—stole, as it were, her heart away, to toy and sport with for a time; and, his pride and fancy sated, cast and trampled it beneath his feet as a thing of naught—and then, forsooth, when the world for which he abandoned her is vanishing from his sight, she is his 'beloved wife' again! Out upon such hypocrisy!" he added, rising from his chair, deliberately tearing the paper into strips, and consuming each strip at a taper which stood lighted on the table. "Out upon it! And that he should think, too, that I would be a party to it! That assuredly is not the least amazing or amusing part of the affair. He could scarcely, I think, have read my character so perfectly as I did his: it is certainly nothing new to find men indulging in excessive liberality when the cost thereof is to be defrayed by others: albeit I must, however regrettingly, decline honouring this draft on my generosity, and instead dispose of it thus—and thus; and so a long good-night to Marmion!"

Sigismund Temple reseated himself as soon as the last shred of paper was consumed, and remained for several minutes in silent cogitation. "Well remembered!" he exclaimed, again rising and ringing the bell; "that rascal Robson must be spoken with. Send Robson, my late brother's servant, to me immediately," he said to the footman who answered the summons. "For the present," he muttered, when the door had

closed, "if, as I think, I know the man, a slight hint will suffice; hereafter I can, if necessary, proportion the reward to the service." A tap came to the door, and, on receiving permission, Robson entered.

"You will continue to observe the strictest secrecy with respect to the unfortunate marriage you witnessed," observed Mr. Sigismund Temple, addressing the discreet, taciturn groom. "I intend taking you into my own service; but your remaining in it will of course depend upon your own behaviour and discretion. I shall make all proper arrangements, you may be sure; but the less so absurd an alliance is talked about the better for our honour and your interest." Robson acquiesced by a respectful bow; and no more was said upon the subject.

"It is your opinion, then," remarked Sigismund Temple to Dr. Bailey a few days after his brother's funeral, "that Sir Edward has fairly outlived the tendency to pulmonary disease which so alarmingly displayed itself some time since?"

"Nay, my young friend, I do not go so far as that: besides, the chief danger is from an affection of the heart, which both he and his sister Marion suffer under, and which *may* carry either of them off at a moment's warning. I have merely said that, if Sir Edward adopts a strict regimen, and, above all, is careful to avoid any sudden and painful shock of agitation, he may live many happy years."

"This is not precisely the report I understood you made to Lord Fanshawe. But that, I daresay," he added bitterly, "is of slight consequence. The lady no doubt marries the brilliant fortune, not its ailing possessor."

"You greatly misapprehend Miss Fanshawe's character," replied the physician. "There are few persons, I believe, less mercenary in any objectionable sense of the term. Quite true that she would not unite herself—that it would never glance across her mind to unite herself with a man who was not rich and occupying a distinguished position. Situated as she is with regard to fortune—for the estates, you know, are entailed on the heirs male, and Lord Fanshawe lives quite up to his income—and with her habits, tastes, and requirements, to do so would be to commit an act of mere suicidal folly. She would as soon think of marrying one of her father's footmen. But I am at the same time equally sure that no establishment, however splendid, would for a moment tempt her to a union with either decrepitude, vice, or folly."

"You speak warmly, Dr. Bailey."

"Because I feel warmly, Mr. Temple. There is no one for whom I have a higher respect than for Miss Fanshawe. She is a thoroughly well-principled, admirable young woman. Conscious of course she must be of the divine gift of beauty the Creator has bestowed on her; but there is not a particle of silly vanity, or of a desire to test its power by the inflic-

tion of pain, in her composition. You, Mr. Temple," added the physician in a more indifferent tone, "and Caroline Fanshawe are very similarly circumstanced, and from the same causes. The wealth which might, and perhaps should have been divided with something like equality between your families, has been diverted and confined to maintaining the representative of each house in dignified splendour; and, in accommodating yourselves to your positions, you are both justified in availing yourselves of every means in your power, not involving meanness or dishonour, to improve your fortunes."

"An evil system," said Sigismund Temple; "the prolific parent of every species of hypocrisy and fraud."

"Well, I do not know. There is *pour et contre*. One does not clearly see how else a powerful class of landlord nobles could be permanently maintained; and that has long been held in this country to be a matter of prime necessity. Misery enough it involves, I grant you, especially to highly-born females, few indeed of whom are so personally gifted as Lord Fanshawe's daughter. She will always be able to command an eligible establishment, even should Sir Edward's health, which is quite possible, show symptoms of relapse before the expiration of the new delay which your brother's death has thrown in the way of the contemplated marriage. But younger brothers, such as you, who have peer or parliamentary

influence to back them, will always be pretty safe in this rich and industrious country. You, for instance, are quite sure of getting your head into the national manger to the tune of two or three thousand a year, irrespective of any or whatever talents you may be found to possess. Your relatives are bound in honour and conscience to see you provided for to that extent, if not more."

"It may be as you say. You think, then, that a relapse would be fatal to Sir Edward?"

"I have not the slightest doubt that in that case I should have the honour of saluting *Sir* Sigismund Temple, Baronet," rejoined the physician, with a meaning, half-ironical expression of eye and voice.

The ringing of the dinner-bell interrupted the colloquy. Dr. Bailey took his leave, and Sigismund Temple, after a few minutes' silent cogitation, descended to the dining-room. The next day he set off for Somersetshire.

Mrs. Temple, as we must now call her, was but partially recovered from the sharp illness by which she had been attacked, when Sigismund Temple arrived at Holly Lodge with the intelligence of her husband's premature and shocking death. His real name he still, of course, carefully concealed. The sudden announcement caused a renewal of her disorder: and several weeks passed before Dr. Bainbridge pronounced her convalescent. Her little boy, too, pined, and seemed falling into a bad way; and Sigismund

Temple half hoped that the widow and the child would, after no great delay, follow the husband and father. He rejoiced to find that neither Mrs. Temple nor her companion Mary Crawford had the slightest suspicion of the true rank or position of his deceased brother; and he smiled to think that, other obstacles in his path to high fortune removed, the claims of Mrs. Arthur Temple and her son need not disturb him much, as he would manage. He remained several days at the Lodge—affected the greatest sympathy for the suffering widow—was very liberal of present pecuniary aid and future promises—and very gracious and condescending towards Mary Crawford, to whom, at parting, he made a munificent present. Mary being a sharp-witted person, and just then naturally mistrustful of the honour and good faith of any one bearing the name of Smythe, it is no wonder that a vague distrust of the motives which could prompt such a gift glanced dimly across her mind. She took care, however, that no outward indication of this feeling should escape her; and Mr. Temple, after receiving her promise to write to him should anything of importance occur, directing her letter to Mr. James Smythe, Post-Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, to lie till called for, departed for London, well satisfied with the result of his visit to Somersetshire.

Obscuring clouds soon gathered over his brilliant hopes. The health of Sir Edward Temple continued obstinately to improve; and, at the end of four months

from the death of Arthur Temple, a day was again fixed for the celebration of his nuptials with Miss Fanshawe. A few days previously to the one named for that purpose, there was a somewhat numerous dinner-party in Grosvenor-square, at which Sir Edward presided in apparently florid health and in jubilant spirits. Sigismund Temple, in whose bosom a hell of envy, hatred, and despair was raging, left the apartment, soon after the company had assembled in the drawing-room, under the plea of headache.

"I wonder," remarked the baronet, "how it happens that Marion is not arrived. She should have been here two hours ago, according to her letter received yesterday."

"This is about her usual time for leaving Devonshire, is it not?" Miss Fanshawe remarked.

"Yes; and her non-arrival is the more surprising, as her letter states that her health seems quite re-established."

"Something may have occurred to delay her departure," said Dr. Bailey. "By the way, Sir Edward," the physician added *sotto voce*, and drawing the baronet quietly apart, "you are very much and dangerously excited. You drank, I observed, two or three glasses of wine at dinner more than you have accustomed yourself to take; and what with that, the expectation of your sister's arrival, and Miss Fanshawe's presence, your pulse is beating, I know, at a fever pace. Pray endeavour to calm yourself."

Sir Edward promised that he would do so, and, returning to the ladies, took a chair beside his beautiful betrothed, and resumed a topic upon which they had been previously conversing.

Sigismund Temple paced up and down the conservatory at the back of the house with wild, disordered steps, and it was long before he succeeded in mastering the outward signs of the tempest which raged within him. When he had done so, he determined on returning to the drawing-room. His absence might, he thought, be remarked upon; for he had a strong suspicion that Dr. Bailey, if not Caroline Fanshawe herself, had penetrated his secret. He had reached the foot of the stairs, when a double, and by no means fashionable knock, was heard at the outer door. On its being opened, an elderly person, having the appearance of a country clergyman, entered, and, offering a card, desired to speak with Sir Edward Temple or his brother. The servant presented the card to Sigismund Temple, who, glancing at it by the dim light of the hall lamp, read the name of the Rev. Mr. Benton, whom he had not, in the partial obscurity, for the moment recognised.

"You are the bearer of ill news, I fear, respecting my sister Marion?" he said hastily.

"Alas! yes, sir. That amiable young lady, I grieve to say, suddenly expired yesterday afternoon."

"Good God! is it possible?"

Sigismund Temple was greatly shocked. He had

long since ceased to feel any affection for his half-brothers; but Marion was a meek, gentle creature, and almost as ill-used by fortune as himself. He led the way to the library, invited the Rev. Mr. Benton by gesture to be seated, and, whilst that worthy divine ran over the commonplaces usually uttered at such times, remained, standing with his back to the speaker, gazing out upon the dark, starless night. It was some time after the pious clergyman had concluded his stock of homilies, that Sigismund Temple turned suddenly round and faced him; and then his countenance wore so strange, so wild an expression, that the reverend gentleman was quite startled by it.

"Ah, sir, you loved your sister fervently! But death, as I have before remarked, has his sad preferences, and does not always choose"——

"Yes—yes!" interrupted the good man's impatient auditor in a shaking, husky voice—"yes, yes; of course; no doubt; but there are others besides me to whom I suppose you wish to break this intelligence?"

"Certainly: to Sir Edward Temple especially. A personally-delivered message was, I thought, desirable, in order that the melancholy announcement might be more tenderly, less abruptly made than by letter."

"Precisely: this way, then, if you please. Yonder," continued Sigismund Temple, standing at the foot of the stairs, and speaking in the same low, quivering

tone—"yonder is the door of the drawing-room. Go in and deliver your message: Sir Edward is there."

The clergyman bowed, and ascended the stairs. The younger brother remained standing in the partially-lighted hall, every faculty strained in eager expectation of what might follow.

Sir Edward Temple was still conversing in a low tone with Miss Fanshawe, when the door opened, and admitted the short, plump figure of the Devonshire rector. The sudden blaze of light seemed for an instant to dazzle and bewilder the new-comer; but, quickly recognising the baronet, he stepped briskly forward, and ceremoniously accosted him. The recognition was mutual. Sir Edward started to his feet with an exclamation of surprise and alarm, and Miss Fanshawe remarked that a deathly pallor instantly overspread his previously flushed and animated countenance.

"Do not unnecessarily alarm yourself, Sir Edward," began the flurried clergyman; and then, plunging at once into his preparatory exordium, he said: "'Death, my dear sir, has his sad likings, and"——

"Death!—death!" echoed the baronet with a scared look, and his chest heaving convulsively—"death! who speaks here of death?"

"Speak to Dr. Bailey," whispered Caroline Fanshawe to a young lady by her side. The physician was talking vehement politics with Lord Fanshawe, at the further end of the apartment, and had not observed

the clergyman's entrance. "For Heaven's sake, Sir Edward," she added, taking his hand, "strive to be calm!"

"Death!—death!" repeated the baronet, his wild, glaring eyes still fixed on the countenance of the intruder. "What has he to say of death?"

"Death, I was saying," resumed the clergyman, "has his strange caprices, and does not always wait till our blood is cold, and our hair grey, before he strikes. Your amiable sister Marion"——

A spasmodic scream burst from Sir Edward Temple, and his right hand at the same moment grasped his left side with convulsive force.

"Your sister Marion, I deeply grieve to say, expired suddenly yesterday afternoon."

The sudden shriek, terminated by a convulsive sob, was feebly repeated; the stricken man half turned towards his beloved Caroline; his nerveless hands strove to grasp hers, but missed their hold; a slight tremor shook his frame, and he fell back in the arms of Dr. Bailey—stone-dead!

"You need not remain," said Sigismund Temple, who had hurried into the apartment, addressing the terrified and bewildered clergyman; "I will see you in the morning." The reverend gentleman gladly complied with the intimation, and early the next day set off on his return to Devonshire, after a brief business interview with Sigismund Temple, much discomposed by the unhappy result of his well-intended mission.

About a month subsequent to the baronet's decease, Sir Sigismund Temple's dressing-room bell rang for the third or fourth time with great violence. He had just returned from Bath, and appeared to be in a state of great and pleasurable excitement. "Is Robson returned yet?" he began, as the door opened. "Oh, there you are at last! And pray, sir," continued the young baronet, drawing himself haughtily up to his full height, and beating down with his confident, contemptuous stare, the at first insolent look of the groom, "how *dare* you absent yourself from my service without leave?"

"Without leave! You forget, *Sir* Sigismund Temple"—— rejoined the man, with returning confidence.

"I forget nothing," interrupted the baronet, "and am blind to nothing. Hark'ye, rascal! you believed me to be in your power, and, to a certain extent, I was, and you might perhaps have made your own terms. Your day is, however, past; and, without the slightest apprehension of anything you could do or say, I might this instant order you to be turned into the street, without a character, to beg, steal, or starve, as your fancy dictated. Look here," added Sir Sigismund, taking a newspaper from his pocket, and pointing to a particular paragraph, "do you see that?"

The man's countenance fell, and he stammered out some apologetic sentences. "Leave the room," was the curt answer. "Yet stay: you may yet deserve

my favour. I am still unwilling, for certain reasons of my own, that my deceased brother's degrading though abortive alliance should be published to the world. You may, therefore, retain your situation, upon the precedent conditions of silence and discretion, although anything you *could* say would, as you well know, be, as matters have fortunately turned out, of no importance. Now go, and send Edwards to me."

On the third day after this scene occurred, John Whiston had set out early in the morning on horseback, to attend a sale of farming-stock at some considerable distance from his home. The weather was warm, the ride fatiguing, and, on his return, he made a halt at Plymouth to refresh himself with a glass or two of brandy and water, and talk over the news; for Master Whiston was a warm politician, and regularly took in *Bell's Messenger*, which he generally contrived to get through during the week from title to imprint. Corn-law repeal politics were just then in the ascendant; and the interesting subject induced Mr. Whiston to prolong his stay considerably beyond his usual hour. He had exhibited no sign of departure, when the stout landlady of the Nag's Head informed him that William Carter demanded speech of him. Carter, by the way, was not the name of the man, but of his vocation—a custom in those parts. Honest John hastened out to inquire the motive of so unusual

a summons; for Susan, satisfied with domestic supremacy, had always scrupulously abstained from interfering with or disturbing her husband's hours of social enjoyment.

"Be anything the matter, William?" he anxiously inquired.

"I doant rightly know," was William's reply, "but missus have been in a terrible flustration from soon after you went this morning."

"Baby beant come—but no, that wont be this month or so. The missus is well?"

"Not particular so in temper. We've all, men and maids, had a terrible hurrying time of it since the postman called; so we've set it down, 'specially as butter is well up in the market jest now, to some crossish news brought in a letter."

Master Whiston was soon mounted, and galloping sharply homewards, followed by William Carter. On his arrival at Vale Farm, a few words from his wife, who appeared much excited—greatly to the alarm of her mother, who had not ceased to insist during the day upon the primary duty of looking to one's own health and welfare before other people's—explained everything. The letter was from Mary Crawford. Lucy was still very ill, she feared dying, and circumstances, which she would hereafter explain, had determined them to return to Vale Farm at once, and Mary Crawford hoped that Susan's husband would come to them immediately.

"You must set off at once, John," said Mrs. Whiston.

"Surely—surely; but where will ye put them, now mother is with us?" Susan's father, a small farmer of the neighbourhood, had died not long before, and the widow had of course taken up her abode at Vale Farm.

"Oh, Susan has settled all that!" said Mrs. Durnford angrily. "All the first floor, bless you—and the large front bedroom—and the four-post bedstead, with the best chintz hangings—and fires blazing away enough to roast an ox, as if there could be any damp in this weather. I suppose Susan herself will have to put up with a back-room, or perhaps a garret, for aught I know."

"God bless thee, Susy!" said the honest yeoman as he kissed his wife. "Thee be always right, and kind, and good, and sensible. And God *will* bless her, mother, whether she lies down to rest in a garret or a palace." Susan had prepared everything for her husband's departure; and he was soon galloping back to Plymouth, from whence he started per mail.

Exactly a week elapsed before Master Whiston and party returned, so slowly did Mrs. Temple's weak state compel them to travel. Once, however, restored to her old and true friends, and the familiar haunts and genial air amidst which she had passed her youth, a speedy change for the better took place: little Arthur, too, improved marvellously in health and appearance,

and Mrs. Temple's spirits gradually regained their old tone. Brighter and brighter gleamed the lately sorrowful and downcast eyes; more and more vivid grew the flush of health and hope upon the lately pallid cheeks; and autumn had hardly passed away before the thin and wasted form had recovered its flowing, graceful outline, and Lucy was herself again!

"You never rightly told me, though you have often been going to do so, Mary," said Mrs. Whiston, late one evening in the ensuing winter, as she and her cousin were sitting up waiting for John Whiston, who had gone to an agricultural dinner, "about what that fellow, that James Smythe, wanted you to do for all the money he gave you. Suppose you tell me now: Lucy and mother are both asleep, so that nobody but I shall hear you?

"I am almost *afraid* to talk of it," said Mary Crawford, turning quite pale; "and perhaps I may have wronged him—have misunderstood his dark hints—and yet"——

"Why he did not surely wish you to"—— Mrs. Whiston's tongue refused to utter the terrible words her imagination suggested.

"I will only say this," said Mary Crawford in a more composed tone than before—"that I was so terrified by his hints and half-sayings, and strange looks, and constant gifts of money, that I discharged the servants; and the next time he came to Bath on one of his flying visits—latterly he always sent for me to

meet him there—I told him—I had written a day or two before to say the child was very ill—that Arthur was dead!"

"Gracious Heaven!"

"You should have seen the look, Susan, which flashed out of his large dark eyes. It was enough to blind one; and yet I thought there was remorse and regret as well as triumph in it. Over and over again he made me repeat the story; how, where, and at what hour the child died. He fully believed it, and had it put in the Bath paper. God forgive me if I wrong him, but it is my firm belief that he believes to this day I made away with the child, in return for his bribes! He made me a larger present than ever," continued Mary Crawford, "which I freely accepted, believing, as I did and do, that the money rightfully belonged to Lucy. He thinks she is gone to live with a distant relative in Sussex; but he will not cast about to do *her* any harm, now that he believes her son is gone. The furniture of Holly Lodge was to be sold; and he told me the proceeds should be paid over to me, for Mrs. Arthur Smythe's use, whenever I chose to apply for it, directing to him as usual. He also, I must say this for him, said he was anxious to provide handsomely for his brother's widow, and hoped that no scruple would be felt in applying to him for any sums, no matter how large, in reason of course he meant, which she may require."

"Why, what *can* be the meaning of it all, Mary?"

said Mrs. Whiston, who had listened with pale affright.

"That is a question I have thought a good deal of lately," replied Mary Crawford. 'I would not, I am sure, willingly misjudge the man; but I do think little Arthur is entitled to some large property in right of his father, which that man is determined to keep him out of by any means, however desperate and wicked; and I think some inquiry ought to be made without further delay."

"Inquiry!" exclaimed Mrs. Whiston, "and so endanger the poor child's life, and perhaps Lucy's, without probably doing any good whatever."

"I will tell you, Susan, how I have been thinkng we may set about it with perfect security. You remember what Lucy told us her father said to her about Lord Fanshawe's daughter, who, I see by the paper, is to be shortly married to Sir Sigismund Temple, a great baronet?"

"To be sure I do: what then?"

"Well, why not forward that parcel of letters to her? She will, perhaps, get her father, the lord, as Lucy is her first-cousin—just as nearly related to her as you are to me—to employ a clever London lawyer in the business. If he could only ferret out that Robson, something might be discovered."

The more this purpose was debated, the more likely and feasible it seemed; and, by the time John Whiston reached home, it was agreed that Lucy should be induced to forward the parcel as directed, with an ex-

planatory letter from herself. Mrs. Temple readily agreed, and the important missive was despatched.

The reply was prompt and gracious. A letter arrived by the earliest possible post from Lord Fanshawe, enclosing another from his daughter, expressing the liveliest sympathy for their relative, and a good deal blaming her for not having made herself known to them before. Both Lord Fanshawe and his daughter had been, it was very apparent, greatly moved by Lady Fanshawe and Mrs. Gaston's letters, Caroline especially; and she vehemently insisted that Lucy, Mrs. Smythe, should immediately take up her abode in Cavendish-square. Lord Fanshawe's solicitor was to have immediate orders to prosecute a vigorous inquiry respecting the family and property of her late husband; and it was announced, in conclusion, that his lordship's butler would arrive at Vale Farm on the day following that of the delivery of the letter, in order to escort Lucy and her son to London.

This was much more than the Whistons or Lucy herself either expected or desired. They were as unwilling to part with her as she was to leave them again. Still, refusal was out of the question, if only for Arthur's sake; and Lucy, with her son, and indispensable Mary Crawford, departed amidst a shower of tears and blessings, on the day after the morrow, under the charge of Lord Fanshawe's butler.

Lucy and her little one received the warmest welcome from her brilliant cousin; Lord Fanshawe was

also kind and patronising. Both father and daughter were evidently alike surprised and pleased by the remarkable beauty of their newly-found relative. Caroline Fanshawe saw in a moment that Lucy's natural elegance and grace required but little conventional polish to render her not only fit to mix with, but to shine, a bright particular star, in the world of fashion. Masters were immediately engaged to supply the deficiencies of her neglected education, and Miss Fanshawe predicted a brilliant future for her, irrespective of any fortune to which she or her son might be entitled from those odious Smythes. That, however, was a matter not to be neglected; and Mr. Rushton, Lord Fanshawe's solicitor, received immediate instructions upon the subject.

The position of Sir Sigismund Temple had, in the meantime, become a dazzling one. He had not only succeeded to one of the richest and most ancient baronetcies in England, but—infinitely higher fortune, as he thought—the beautiful, magnificent Caroline Fanshawe would, there was little doubt, be his wife before many days were past! His passion for that lady amounted almost to idolatry; and without her he felt that station, wealth, honours, would be for him mere dross and rags, foully as he had ventured for them. His anxious assiduities had long since been marked and unmistakable; but the requirements of decorum, and the usages of society, necessitated that many months

should elapse after Sir Edward Temple's death before he could appear as an ostensible suitor for the hand of the lady once destined to be that brother's wife. At length, just about three weeks previous to Lucy's arrival in Cavendish-square, Sir Sigismund had been urged to a yet somewhat precipitate declaration by the pointed and well-received attentions of a young and wealthy viscount. On the same day, and nearly at the same hour, a similar proposal reached Caroline Fanshawe from the viscount; and there was some doubt and hesitation as to which should be accepted. She gave interviews to both suitors, cold, somewhat formal ones, in the presence of her father, and, with the proud candour which distinguished her, promised each of them that she would seriously weigh and consider all they had urged, and that Lord Fanshawe would communicate her decision in a month from that time. From a hint afforded Sir Sigismund by his lordship, in a subsequent private conversation, that gentleman felt little doubt as to whom the choice would fall upon. To cheat the lazy-footed time, as well as to somewhat calm the tumult of emotion by which he was shaken, the young baronet passed the agitating interval in hurrying from place to place, accompanied only by his servant Robson. He crossed over to France; returned; was off to the Highlands; back again, and away to Wales—as if he thought rapidity of motion and change of scene would hasten on the creeping hours.

Was this wild fleeing to and fro, it may be asked,

caused solely by the feverish restlessness, the morbid impatience, of a consuming passion? We may be sure it was not: that the beckoning shapes, the calling shadows, which he vainly endeavoured to outstrip and banish from his sight by frequent and rapid change of scene, were not forms of light and loveliness, not the brilliant exhalations of a lover's fervid fancy. The wild force, the burning intensity of his passion for Miss Fanshawe, but gave articulate significance to the suggestions of an excited conscience—to the else confused spectre-whisperings which menaced the bright Future with the dark Past. If it were true that the Avenger of Blood walked the earth to visit deeds unseen of men with retribution, would He permit him to clutch the prize remorselessly played for, and for which he, Sigismund Temple, would again play, on the same evil and desperate chance, a thousand times over? How vulnerable he was!—how dark, fathomless, and terrible the gulph which stretched beneath the lofty and dazzling pinnacle upon which he trembled—ever shuddering with undefined apprehension lest the unseen hand, which his morbid imagination pictured as extended over him with menacing gestures, should suddenly hurl him into the black void! The night vision only more distinctly shadowed forth the fearful day phantasy! Ever, when about to clasp that form of unmatched beauty, it changed to the stern likeness of one of his dead brothers—of Sir Edward oftenest, with his pale solemnity of face and outstretched finger, ever

pointing to the splendid mausoleum of the Temples, where the dreamer always perceived that another richly-decorated coffin had been placed since he last stood there, but the inscription upon which he could not read. His union, then, he mentally argued, with Miss Fanshawe could alone dissipate these fancies, by proving them to be the mere idle coinage of an excited brain—phantasms which, till that great hope were consummated, might have power over him, but not one moment longer.

The seemingly interminable period of suspense and fear was at length all but passed, and the day before it expired Robson arrived at the mansion in Cavendish-square, with a letter from Sir Sigismund, whom he had left at Bath. The reply was an invitation to the baronet from Lord Fanshawe to dine with him the next evening *en famille*, when he would be received as his lordship's future son-in-law. Robson was to remain in London, but the letter he had strict orders to forward by a special messenger to Bath, the instant it reached his hands.

Mr. Rushton, the solicitor, was in the library when Robson called, where he had been for a considerable time engaged in listening to Mary Crawford's account of Lucy's marriage, desertion, the death of her husband, and subsequent strange and suspicious conduct of the deceased's brother, Mr. James Smythe. He was sitting alone, silently pondering the matter, when Lord Fanshawe entered, and, after a few minutes' conversation

relative to the 'Smythe' affair, said: "You will be wanted in a day or two, Rushton, to receive instructions relative to a marriage-settlement, of which you must prepare a draft for counsel's approval. There will be no great difficulty, as Sir Sigismund Temple gives me *carte blanche* to insert what sums and conditions I please."

"Sir Sigismund Temple! Then the lying jade Rumour has spoken truth for once."

"Yes: Robson has just now received an acceptance of the baronet's proposals. Sir Sigismund is at Bath."

"Robson!—Robson!" ejaculated the solicitor, with a sudden flush of his pale face. "What is he?"

"Sir Sigismund Temple's favourite groom. Why do you ask?"

"Oh nothing, nothing," replied Mr. Rushton, as carelessly as he could. "I thought I knew the name, that's all. When do you expect Sir Sigismund will arrive in town?"

"He will dine here to-morrow evening at seven, and I expect will come up two or three hours before by the express train."

Shortly afterwards Lord Fanshawe went away, and the solicitor, immediately he was alone, took down a Baronetage from one of the shelves, and eagerly turned over the leaves. "Very odd coincidences," he muttered, after a few minutes' perusal of one of its pages; "at all events, Mr. Arthur Temple died at the

same time, and by the same accident, as this reputed Arthur Smythe. The woman's description, too, of the brother remarkably corresponds to—— Then the groom Robson—— This must be looked to at once."

Amongst the persons awaiting on the following day the arrival of the express train at the Paddington station were Mary Crawford, closely muffled up and veiled, and Mr. Rushton. They kept back out of view as much as possible; and the solicitor, upon the signal being made that the train was at hand, whispered to his companion: "Now mind and look sharp at the passengers, and tell me if you see Mr. James Smythe!"

"That is he!" exclaimed Mary Crawford, with repressed anger, and pointing to a fashionably-attired gentleman hastily alighting from one of the carriages. "That is Mr. James Smythe!"

"I thought so," said the solicitor, "from Robson's silence and confusion: he will speak out now probably. That gentleman," he added, "whom you call Smythe, calls himself Sir Sigismund Temple."

A carriage was in waiting for the baronet, in which he immediately drove off homewards; and the cab which conveyed Mr. Rushton and Mary Crawford was a few minutes afterwards tearing along in the direction of Cavendish-square.

The triumphant lover trod on air as he ascended to his dressing-room to prepare for his visit to Lord

Fanshawe. There was an admirable portrait of the beautiful Caroline in the apartment, which had been painted for his brother Sir Edward. Sir Sigismund's dark eyes lightened with rapture as he gazed upon it. "Mine—mine—mine—beyond the power of chance!" he exclaimed. "Oh, what are kings or emperors to me!" and his stormy joy laughed out in a wild burst of mirth. It was, however, necessary to calm himself somewhat, and by a strong effort he did so. "Send Robson to me," he said to a valet who answered his bell: "I wish to speak with him."

"He was sent for by some one about two o'clock to-day, and has not since returned," replied the man.

"That is strange behaviour. But come; it is time that I should dress."

His toilet was accomplished; but it was yet much too early to proceed to Cavendish-square. He intended arriving there half an hour before the time appointed for dinner, in the assured expectation of then finding Miss Fanshawe alone in the drawing-room. It was still only half-past five, albeit evening had long closed in. Restless, perturbed, excited as he was, immobility, quiet, inaction was impossible. A fancy seized him; he would while away the lingering interval by a gallop. Saddle-horses for himself and groom were immediately ordered round: he mounted, and in his flurry and excitation of spirit dashed with fierce speed towards Oxford-street, and then on in the direction of Bayswater. He rode on for between

four and five miles, turned, came back at the same pace, and arrived, flushed with the exercise, in Cavendish-square.

There were lights in the drawing-room, and he discerned a female figure there, and only one. He eagerly alighted, threw the bridle to his groom, but without pausing to give him any order to stay or return home, and the next minute was bounding up the stairs, his pulse throbbing and his eyes on fire with excess of emotion.

The lady he had indistinctly discerned through the muslin curtains of the drawing-room was bending over some object hidden by her figure, which he could alone see, her head, from the stooping attitude, being invisible to him. The thick carpets prevented his steps from being heard: and he, nothing doubting that Caroline Fanshawe was before him, rushed forwards, and threw himself at her feet, exclaiming, in the broken, vehement tones of passion, "Caroline—beloved—adored!"

A cry of alarm escaped the lady as she turned, and disclosed to the thunder-stricken man at her feet the well-remembered features of Mrs. Temple — of his dead brother's wife! And there, too, he recognised instinctively, was her son, whom he had believed dead—hers and his brother's son, over whom she had been leaning.

A fierce irrepressible cry burst from him as he sprang up, white with terror, and staggered back

from before the appalling vision by which he was so suddenly confronted. "Merciful God! Speak—when—for what purpose—how—why is this?" he gasped with wild incoherence.

A door at the further side of the spacious apartment was thrown sharply open, and Lord Fanshawe and his daughter hurried in, followed by Dr. Bailey, Mr. Rushton, and Mary Crawford. Robson, too, was there, but he remained in the doorway, as if uncertain whether or not he was expected to follow. The completeness of his ruin flashed at the sight instantly upon Sigismund Temple: he comprehended everything; and, although a tempest was sounding in his ears, he could discern through all the still small voice proclaiming that judgment, fatal and irreversible, had fallen upon him. His fiery look became almost immediately riveted upon the countenance of Miss Fanshawe. He there read painful emotion—regret—compassion, but also disdain—resolve. "Miss Fanshawe," he cried with a choking voice, as he sprang forward and caught her dress, for she had turned to leave the apartment — "Caroline—hear me but one word—but one!"

The lady turned half round, looked fixedly at him for a moment with a mingled expression of sorrow and contempt, then gently but firmly disengaged her robe, and with a sad but peremptory gesture of farewell passed on.

"My note, which must have been delivered in Gros-

venor-square nearly an hour ago, should have prevented this unpleasant scene. I little expected to see you here, Mr. Temple, after its perusal," said Lord Fanshawe, in his coldest, haughtiest tones.

"It is also right," said Dr. Bailey, "I should inform Mr. Temple, that, in addition to what his lordship has discovered relative to this lady and her child, I have thought it my duty, under present circumstances, to acquaint him with a fact which some time ago came to my knowledge relative to Sir Edward Temple's death. My informant was the Rev. Mr. Benton. Mr. Temple will not be at a loss to understand my meaning."

Sigismund Temple replied not to these taunts by word, or look, or gesture. His eyes remained fixed upon the door through which Caroline Fanshawe had passed, as if expecting her return. Presently a new and frightful expression passed over his face; he seized his hat, which had fallen on the floor, and staggered out of the apartment. Arrived at the head of the stairs, he turned round, steadied himself by the balustrade, hurled a burst of passionate defiance and invective at Lord Fanshawe and the physician, and then sprang with the speed and fury of a maniac down the stairs. His horse was still at the door; he vaulted into the saddle, struck the high-blooded animal repeatedly with a whip he snatched from the groom, and was carried off at a fearful pace. The terrified horse had got the bit between his teeth, and was unmanage-

able; but this the unfortunate rider neither knew nor recked of. The universe seemed crashing, whirling round him as he dashed madly by the zig-zag lines of light, and along the roaring streets, followed by the shoutings and execrations of the people whose lives he was endangering. Just as he neared the entrance of Duke-street, Grosvenor-square, a loaded van came sharply out of it into Oxford-street. He could not if he would have checked the maddened horse in time to avoid a collision. He did not probably attempt it, and the animal's head came with the force of a cannon-shot against the hind-wheel of the van. Mr. Temple was hurled with tremendous force upon the foot-pavement, and by the time his groom came up it had been discovered that he must have died instantaneously. The horse was also killed.

The play is over—the story told; but it may be necessary, as the curtain slowly descends, to subjoin a few particulars relative to the surviving actors in this perhaps too-easily-recognised domestic drama.

An attempt was made by a Mr. Camelford, who, had neither of the Temples left male issue, would have been heir-at-law to the title and estates, to dispute the validity of Mrs. Temple's marriage, or, more correctly speaking, that Arthur Smythe was really Arthur Temple. This, however, Robson's evidence, supported by several letters addressed to Arthur Temple by his brother Sigismund relative to his ill-advised union with

Lucy Gaston, found amongst Sigismund Temple's private papers—though why preserved it seems difficult to say—established beyond doubt or question, and the suit was ultimately abandoned.

Sir Arthur Temple is now in his sixth year, and continues in the enjoyment of excellent health, watched over with prideful tenderness by his mother, the still very beautiful Lucy of our story. Although, it is said, frequently tempted, and no wonder, to enter again into the bonds of holy matrimony, she has hitherto resolutely declined every offer of the sort, however dazzling. In truth, Mrs. Temple does not appear to be greatly enamoured of state and splendour, for she never seems so thoroughly delighted and happy as when she can escape from Grosvenor-square or Temple House, with her son, and, of course, Mary Crawford, to Vale Farm, and be again the Lucy of her young days, with her trusty and now rejoicing friends, the Whistons, to every one of whose children, and they are already rather numerous, she is the bountiful and loving godmother.

Lord Fanshawe still survives, and in excellent preservation, much to the chagrin of the heir-expectant, whose locks are already gray with age and the hope still deferred of title and estate. His lordship's daughter, the brilliant Caroline, married, six months after Sigismund Temple's death, the viscount she had refused a few days previous to that event. She is now the star and cynosure of the British court; and adepts

in the histories and mysteries of the peerage will, in all probability, find little difficulty in divining the title of the beautiful viscountess—a piece of information which we, for various reasons, decline recording here.

Edinburgh, August 1883.

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